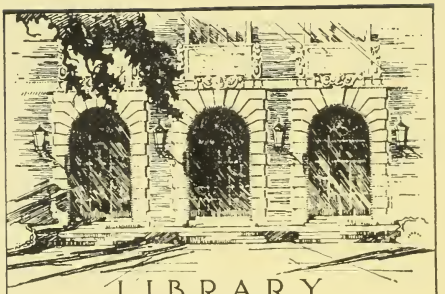

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TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD.

A ROMANCE.

When sick of imprisoning walls,
  I fly to the sunshine and flowers;
When grief, or when care on me falls,
  I forget it, Romance, in thy bowers.

Not all a Fiction; much of Truth is there:
Historic Records, and a Poet's Dream.

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD.

A ROMANCE.

BY ELIZABETH THORNTON,
AUTHORESS OF "THE MARCHIONESS," "LADY ALICE," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD.

A ROMANCE.

CHAPTER I.

Herman looked at the old man's face, and it was scarcely necessary to tell him that his absence, short as it had been, (little more than three hours) fortunately, or unfortunately, was most critically timed; for scarcely was he out of sight when the French officers of justice, escorted by a band of English halberdiers, arrived, and in two hours afterwards again departed with Madame von Felsenberg, Gertrude, and

Blanche, placed on pillions behind them as prisoners.

"Oh that I had returned time enough to have spoken to them before they were thus rudely torn from their home!" exclaimed Herman.

"Nay, *mein Herr!*" said Barneck, "rather bless the gracious Mary, and the holy Providence, that sent you out of the way, in order to preserve your liberty, the better to aid my dear unhappy lady and the young ladies."

"I know not," replied Herman, doubtingly; "perhaps it *is* better so. My mother, I know, will rejoice at my escape."

"That will she, that did she, and hurried her preparations for the journey; and was anxious to depart, fearing lest you should return and be taken. 'Tell him,' she whispered to me, as they put her on the horse, 'that we are going to Paris. I know he will follow us. Tell him to dis-

guise himself, and, above all, to guard his freedom; no other way can he assist us, or protect the little one whom I am forced to leave.'"

"She is right!" said Herman, musing; "she is right. I will implicitly obey her directions, and fight or fly, as I best may, when my liberty is in jeopardy."

The evening was far advanced. The curfew had already sounded when they reached the now desolate dwelling, which, in the confusion and disarray of every thing within, bore palpable traces of the hurried departure of its principal inmates. Several hours of the night were dedicated to arrangements necessary before quitting a house where they had resided so long, — where had taken place such strange vicissitudes of fortune, such chequered scenes of happiness and misery; a calm and tranquil existence, flowing on with the even smoothness of a quiet stream, then

suddenly ruffled into the hoarse and headlong torrent, threatening death and destruction in its furious course.

Weary in body and mind, at a late hour of the night, Herman threw himself on his bed and slept, spite of his unquiet spirit. One circumstance, indeed, gave him great comfort: — they had allowed Esther to attend her lady, and the conduct of the officers Barneck spoke of as civil and respectful to their prisoners; so that he hoped the only ill they would have to endure at present would be the want of liberty. With the first beams of returning light they were all again astir, and ere the sun was above the horizon, Herman, Barneck, Fritz, and a guide, were on horseback, with the little Betta carried before one or other of them, as her caprice or their convenience dictated.

His intention was to cross the moor, to a seaport where they might embark for Lon-

don, as the safer and less fatiguing mode of making the journey. It was necessary he should visit the metropolis, not only to get his passport regulated, but also, if possible, to see the Queen again before he quitted England.

Nearly the whole day was occupied in traversing this trackless and dreary moor, which would have been impassable but for the sagacity of the horse on which the guide was mounted; abounding, as it did, in bogs and quagmires, spreading in treacherous patches over it, to entrap the unwary traveller. The horse trusted apparently, like a dog, to his nose; for many times he stopped suddenly during the journey, suspiciously sniffing the ground, then making a circuit round, or passing slowly and cautiously over the doubtful spot.

During this long ride they scarcely saw a human creature. No sights or sounds broke the dreary monotony of the scene,

save the wandering and scattered sheep, and now and then the neigh of the wild horses bred in its solitudes, with the melancholy cry of the gray plover wheeling in eternal round above their heads. At length as the sun was setting, they descended a short, but steep declivity, which led them to the beaten track terminating in the high road, and it was dark ere they reached their destination. They were fortunate enough to find a vessel about to sail, got at once on board, and in a few days found themselves in London.

One great object Herman hoped to achieve in London, was to place Betta under the care of a lady in the service of the Queen, who was remotely allied to his mother; and the first question he put to his host on alighting at the inn, was relative to the court. He learned with some vexation that it was now at Greenwich, fearing this circumstance would delay his journey.

Determined, however, to lose no time himself, he got into a boat and was rowed down the river. As they were approaching the palace one of the royal barges passed them. At the moment that it shot ahead of them by the impulse of its six stout rowers, he noticed that a lady in it looked earnestly at him. The next moment the oars of the barge were shipped, the little wherry in which he sat, in its turn glided by the stately barge, and a packet was thrown from it and fell at his feet. It was one of the small ivory tablets commonly used for memorandums. On one of the leaves was written, "In an hour hence come to the eastern door of the Archers' Court."

Herman neither knew the handwriting nor the lady, but he punctually obeyed the summons, so unceremoniously given, and repaired to the spot indicated. At the door, apparently watching for him, stood Francesco Philippo, an attached and faith-

ful Spaniard in the service of the Queen, by whom he was conducted to an apartment, where sat the lady he had seen in the barge. She announced herself as Lady Willoughby, another devoted friend of the unhappy Katharine.

As he entered the room she said, "You must forgive the rude style in which your presence was requested, sir. I recognised you in the boat. I was in attendance on her Highness when you had an audience some months since, and was anxious to tell you that you will do well not to appear too openly in London. You do not stand high in the favour of his Eminence of York, as, indeed, do none of those who wish well to the Queen's majesty. Her grace knows that your lady mother has been conveyed to France, and, judging you were about to follow her, would fain charge you with a letter. Her health is greatly shaken by the vexation of spirit she endures about this

divorce, which I fear they will bring about, to the great detriment and scandal of the church and the kingdom, when they shall have put the heretic Boleyn on the throne."

Herman expressed his astonishment that the Cardinal should favour a plan for the elevation of one who was known to be a convert to the Lutheran heresy; he who affected to be so firmly devoted to the interests of the Catholic church.

"Yes," said Lady Willoughby, "it is marvellous enough; and, verily, at times I could be mirthful thereat, were it not of such doleful import to my gracious mistress. To see this crafty Cardinal, who, in his efforts to reach the goal of his ambition, sets at nought all obstacles, tramples on justice, right, and truth: to see him, the great statesman whose will is law in these realms, and who rules the destinies of many others; the arch-deceiver, who works his will by his cunning stratagems and manifold devices, no better

than a puppet in the hands of the King in this affair. The King hath duped, and drives him on to what will surely prove his destruction. The King hath made him believe that his will is not to put Boleyn on the throne; but we know better. She hath no love for his Highness, and will not be bought but at the price of a crown; the brightest jewel of which, perhaps, in her eyes, is the power to thwart and control the Cardinal, whom she hates. Oh yes, I could laugh to see how craft and cunning do o'erreach themselves: to see this mighty man, this would-be Pope, dancing to any tune it may please the young Lutheran to play. I pray you, sir, note what I now say to you. It is the wish of her Highness I should explain to you how things stand, that you may show them to the Emperor, in whom alone hath she any hope of help to her cause, and that of the church, which are bound up together. She

prays you fully to instruct the Emperor therein, that he may concert with his Holiness to prevent this great scandal. As for these cardinals, she hath no faith in them: they are wolves in sheep's clothing, who batten on their flocks."

Lady Willoughby now left the room, but soon returned again with some letters, saying, "This one her Majesty requests you to deliver to your imperial master yourself, or to send it by a sure hand. She sends you kind greeting, and would have admitted you to her presence, but that her health is sorely shaken. She hath need to spare herself; and, God knoweth, it does her no good to discuss matters such as these. This other letter is for the French King, and she hopes it may be serviceable to yourself."

Herman now took leave of Lady Willoughby, and, having sought, and found Madame Garcia willing to take charge of little Betta, for whom she promised to send,

he hastened back to arrange his affairs for quitting England, which he did early on the following morning, and arrived in Paris without meeting with any occurrence worth recording.

CHAPTER II.

HERMAN's first occupation was to ascertain where the prisoners had been conveyed, and found they were in the Châtelet. Thither he repaired, and was, after some delay, admitted. Traversing numerous courts and passages, and climbing a narrow spiral staircase, he entered a long low room; and once again were feelings of joy and sorrow so mingled in his heart, that he knew not which predominated, at sight of those for whom that warm heart beat so fondly, imprisoned and unhappy. He saw them all: they had met again; but, alas! under what circumstances! The room was

decently furnished, and sufficiently commodious. It had little the air of a prison, except in the massy bars of iron which secured the windows.

An oaken table stood at the farther end, round which sat his mother, Blanche, and Gertrude; Esther on the tiled floor at their feet. At his appearance a joyful exclamation burst simultaneously from the whole group, who sprung up to greet a visiter so welcome. Even Blanche, the cold, shy Blanche, apparently obeying an involuntary impulse, with sparkling eyes rushed to meet the astonished young man, whose arms seemed also involuntarily stretched forth to enfold her, but, checking herself, she resumed her gravity, and with a deep blush retreated behind the others. Short as their separation had been, there was nevertheless much to ask and to tell.

Many and eager were the questions respectively put and answered. Foremost

among them were those that related to the little Betta, whose bestowal in safety and comfort was a beam of sunshine amid the gloom which now enveloped the family, and tended much to calm and cheer them.

"Would you believe, Herman," said Gertrude, "that *we* are accused of the death of De Sablons? That villanous Durochet has accused us of the crime! the better, doubtless, to screen himself; for I firmly believe he himself murdered him."

"For shame, Gertrude!" said Lady Felsenberg, sharply. "How often must I say to you, 'Judge not, lest ye be judged?' You have no proof whatever, yet you rashly dare to assert his guilt. God knows the sad secret," she added gravely. "The name of the guilty one will be published, and the crime punished, when his will shall ordain its disclosure. You will know the fatal truth but too soon."

The sad solemnity with which the last

words were uttered by her mother, checked and subdued the impetuous volubility of Gertrude, who sat down pale and silent, depressed and frightened, she knew not why. A gloomy pause was broken by Herman's inquiries of how they were treated. They had nothing to complain of but the loss of liberty. Their meals were decently and regularly served.

"They are very civil to us," said Gertrude; "and we are visited often by Father Constantin, a kind-hearted man, who seems already greatly interested in our fate. It is from him we learned that Durochet is our accuser, and that he has brought witnesses from England to support the charge against us. The good Father has also sought legal assistance for us, and has selected two gentlemen to defend us in the criminal court."

After some farther conversation Her-

man departed, rejoicing to find the sorrows of captivity were not heightened by harshness or incivility on the part of their gaolers; and, anxious to procure for them the protection of those who might have power to influence their fate, he returned to the auberge, where he had taken up his abode, to seek the letter to the King.

By one of those sad cross accidents which often happen in our mortal course, the packet which contained the letters of the Queen of England had disappeared. He knew not how, nor where it had been lost; but it was gone.

In the perplexity occasioned by this most untoward circumstance he scarcely knew what to do, but at length resolved to go at once in search of the nobleman to whom he had intended to commit the Emperor's letter for transmission, uncertain as he was when he himself might be able to deliver it.

He was fortunate enough to find him at

home, and related at once the embarrassment of his situation. After listening quietly to all that Herman thought proper to tell, he replied, "I need not seek to know the particulars of this case, whether the parties accused are guilty or innocent, for that makes little difference: those who have most power to bribe or influence the judges will be sure of a verdict. Who is the party opposed to you? and what motives urge his pursuit of justice?—for by that name all men dignify their actions."

To these questions Herman replied, that he knew little of the man, but that he believed him to be little better than a needy adventurer, pushed on by anger and revenge at the defeat of his plans of aggrandizement, occasioned by the death of his associate.

"I congratulate you, sir!" said the Count de Préville. "In this case, you may be nearly certain of defeating him. You

belong to a noble family; you have money. Had you been unknown and necessitous, I could as certainly have predicted the decision of the court against you. In the reign of the late King, Louis the Twelfth, things were not so well arranged. *He* was called the King of the People; our brave, magnificent, and chivalrous François is, *par excellence*, the King of the Aristocracy."

Whatever Herman might think of the justice or good policy of such a state of things, it was not in human nature to lament facts so favourable to the individual interests of himself and his family. He quitted the Count with a heart much lighter.

On his return to the auberge he was eagerly questioned by Barneck about "his poor dear lady," and was promised he should see her on the morrow. The faithful old servant went to his bed rejoicing.

Alas for April sunshine, and the hopes of man! As the poet so justly says,—

> "The spider's most attenuated thread is cord,
> Is cable, to man's feebler hold on happiness!"

On the morrow, when they presented themselves at the gate of the Châtelet with the order for admission, which had before been deemed sufficient, they were denied an entrance, and told that instructions had been sent to place the prisoners *au secret*, and suffer none to see them. Astonished and alarmed, Herman again hastened to the *Hôtel* of the Count de Préville. Unfortunately he had quitted Paris, and was not expected back for some time. With slow and melancholy steps he turned away, uncertain what next he should do.

He sauntered on to the banks of the Seine, and apparently watched the boats gliding on its surface, and the washermen standing in its waves; but in truth he

noticed neither one nor the other. His thoughts were occupied with his own embarrassing affairs. Again he turned and rambled on in a different direction, till he had traversed the Rue St. Antoine, and passed the gloomy towers of the Bastille. He was now in the neighbourhood of the royal residence. With vexation and regret he thought of the lost letters, and half resolved to try and obtain admission to the King without them. But this was a hopeless project: without some sort of passport to his presence, he would not be suffered to pass, and the idea was abandoned. Although the air was sharp and cold, for it was now the middle of December, the casquet on his head seemed to heat and irritate his working brain, and he roughly pushed it from his forehead. A ring he constantly wore had turned on his finger, and in the hasty movement of his hand slightly scratched his face. It was the ring

presented to him at Oleron, by the Lady Marguerite.

Suddenly as he looked at it, his eye brightened, and hope awoke in his heart. With a light and quick step he returned again to the palace, soliloquizing as he went, "I will ask for the Lady Marguerite! Who knows but that she may be able to aid me? She said she had some influence at the French court. Who knows, as she said, but the ring may prove a talisman to serve me at my need?"

He crossed the great court, filled with a bustling crowd hastily moving in different directions, entered the palace, and proceeded until he was stopped, when he inquired for the Lady Marguerite, and, to invite civility, at the same time offered a piece of money.

"What Lady Marguerite?" said the man.

"A lady in the service of, and living with the King's sister," replied Herman.

"I know no such person; but pass on!" He did so, crossed another court and entered a hall, from which arose a broad staircase, guarded by a massive marble balustrade. At the foot of it stood two sentinels, who, on his approach, crossed their halberds to bar his passage.

Again he made a demand to see the lady he was in quest of, presenting the same golden passport. After some hesitation they also suffered him to proceed. He mounted the broad stairs, and saw before him the open door of the guard chamber, in which a small number of officers were lounging. There seemed no end to his difficulties, for here he was rudely repulsed with an assurance that there was no Lady Marguerite in the service of the King's sister.

Herman, with bitter feelings of grief and indignation swelling in his heart, at the deceit and ingratitude of the woman he had

so well served in the hour of danger and difficulty, turned away, and was about to retreat in despair; when the figure of the lady presented itself to his memory as she had then appeared, grateful, gracious, and dignified.

He recalled the whole of her conduct during that eventful day and night, and he finished his reverie on the top of the stairs by exclaiming aloud, "It is impossible! she could not—would not have deceived me!"

The officer appeared to be watching him, probably rendered curious by the eager yet embarrassed manner of the applicant. As Herman uttered this ejaculation, he said, "How old is the lady you wish to find? She is of course young and handsome? I am afraid she has jilted you, sir!" he added with a smile.

Spite of his smile of derision and his mocking mien, Herman turned again to him,

described the lady, and repeated, "'Tis impossible that she should have deceived me. Truth and honour were stamped on her noble brow. She was a woman such as one seldom sees. She said she had influence at the court, and gave me this ring as a token of her gratitude, for a small service I had the good fortune to render her."

"Ha!" said the officer, as he looked at the ring, "I begin to comprehend this affair. We have a Lady Marguerite, of whom we—of whom France is proud. She is, indeed, such a woman as one seldom sees. Good and great as she is beautiful. Follow me, sir. Had you sooner shown the ring, it would have saved you much trouble. You would have found it a passport no one would have dared to disobey!"

Herman gladly followed him. They traversed the guard-room, passed through a long gallery into a saloon, where he

requested him to wait, disappearing by a door on the opposite side. In a few minutes a young and elegant lady entered, arrayed in the singular but picturesque dress of a Navarrese gentlewoman. The deep black and gold fringe swinging round her slender ankles and white arms, from the ample folds of the satin petticoat and the hanging sleeves of the tight bodice, which set off to the utmost advantage the slender and graceful form it covered; aided in its effect by the light and transparent veil fastened to the comb at the back of the head, and falling to the ground in shadowy folds.

As this graceful lady advanced, she fixed her large dark eyes on Herman, and said with a courtesy, "You request an audience of her Highness the Queen of Navarre, sir?"

"No, madam," he replied in his turn, earnestly regarding the handsome creature

who stood before him, "It is the Lady Marguerite, who is in the service of the Duchesse D'Alençon. I had the pleasure some two years since to ——"

He was interrupted by the dark eyed lady, who, gaily clapping her hands, exclaimed with all the original *naiveté* of her character, "It is—it is our master of the horse! our knight of the mountains, about whom we have said and sung so much, hardly hoping again to see him!"

"Tornalina!" said the astonished young man. "Is it, indeed, the handsome Spanish maiden transformed into a court lady?"

"Indeed it is," she replied, laughing. "Don't you see that I was born to grace a court? How proudly I bear my gay plumage?"

"Yes, truly! you are at once so like and so unlike what you were, that I was greatly puzzled, until your voice, and, above all, your

laugh recalled to my memory the mountain maiden."

He was about to say more, but she hastily left him.

Returning again, after a short absence, with a gay and laughing face, she said, "Advance, noble knight of the galloping steed! I have orders to present you to her Highness the Duchesse D'Alençon, now Queen of Navarre. Advance, and see if you can discover the Lady Marguerite among the dames and damsels in her train."

Herman obeyed, and as he crossed the chamber, for the first time his thoughts turned to his dress. It certainly was not a courtly garb he wore, for he had arrayed himself in a plain brown suit of the simplest fashion, the better to escape observation. But, fit or unfit, it could not now be changed; and all thought on the subject soon vanished.

He had entered a lofty and spacious

apartment, splendid with mirrors, painting and gilding: it was lighted by a long row of windows, the many-tinted panes of which threw a chequered and varied shade on the figured *parquet* of the floor. In the deep recesses of the window frames stood alabaster vases, filled with fresh and sweet-scented flowers, whose fragrance perfumed the air. All round the room were placed innumerable wax torches in gilded sconces, wreathed with garlands of roses and lilies; the light shafts of the columns which supported a gallery above, were decorated in the same manner. A group of ladies, many of them young and handsome, and all elegantly dressed, graced this splendid chamber, (evidently prepared for a *fête*) and gave additional beauty to the magnificent scene.

Foremost and most distinguished, arrayed for a court reception, stood that noble lady on whose fair and lofty brow the sparkling diadem by which it was encircled seemed to

borrow, not to bestow distinction. Herman looked at her, and recognised the unforgotten Lady Marguerite in the Queen of Navarre, that firm and faithful protectress of the hunted and persecuted Protestants,—their only steady and consistent friend in France.

The King (although a convert to the new faith) of a character too weak and vacillating steadily to pursue any consistent course of policy, or fettered by necessities naturally resulting from his dissolute habits and reckless expenditure, alternately offered them a feeble and inefficient protection, or abandoned them utterly to the relentless persecution of enemies, who, instigated by the blind and stupid bigotry of ignorant intolerance, committed excesses of cruelty so atrocious, as to make us shudder at the bare recital.

And thus have bigots ever done ! and thus will ever do !
Hate, harass, kill their fellow men, to prove their doctrines true.

CHAPTER III.

Astonished and somewhat confused, Herman stood before the Queen of Navarre; but quickly reassured by the smiling welcome he met with, he bent his knee, and kissed the hand graciously extended towards him, as she said, "Welcome, noble sir; we are glad to see again our own true knight! You sought us: what can we do to serve a gentleman to whom we deem ourselves greatly beholden?"

Herman related the unhappy circumstances under which his family were placed.

"How!" she exclaimed, "confined! The Lady Felsenberg imprisoned. On what charge?"

Herman hesitated, and at length stammered out a few words, that seemed to choke him, in explanation.

"Murder!" she repeated with a start, "but the accusation is false? they are doubtless innocent?"

Again Herman cast down his eyes and hesitated. She looked at him earnestly for a moment, motioned to the ladies to retire, and as they retreated she said gravely, "I am anxious to serve you, sir; but to enable me to do so you must be candid with me. There must be no reserve. Do you believe the charge to be a just one?"

"Alas, your Highness!" he replied, "I know not what to say; I have never dared to ask. I have always feared to inquire."

"I comprehend you, sir: it is a sufficient answer. Had you not believed it true, you would not have feared to inquire! Who was the person so mysteriously destroyed?"

"He—he was—the husband of my

mother," said Herman, half suffocated by grief and shame.

"Great God! — her husband!" exclaimed the Queen, with a painful contraction of the muscles of her face. "I cannot, must not, will not plead for, or protect a woman who ——"

She stopped. The pale and agitated countenance of the brave young man, to whom she owed a weighty obligation, moved her greatly. After a pause of silent reflection, she said, "There is but one course to take in an affair like this. You must get this lady out of confinement. Effect her escape from Le Châtelet."

"Alas, madam!" he replied, "I fear she will not consent: I have already proposed this plan."

"How! she will not consent to fly from condemnation, from death?"

"No," said Herman mournfully: "she has never explained her motives for refusing to

listen to my proposal, and, as I told your Highness, I have not dared to investigate. But I believe she thinks it her duty to submit to punishment, to bow her head, in humbleness to the will of God."

"May the holy saints have heed of us, but this is a strange affair!" exclaimed the Queen surprised, but apparently also greatly relieved, for her bright eyes sparkled, and her cheek again dimpled with a smile as she added, "You describe your lady mother as gentle, affectionate, and just, refusing to fly though threatened with death, because she thinks it her duty to submit and suffer. Trust me, sir, this lady is no murderer! take comfort, sir, and courage. Be sure there is some unhappy combination of circumstances which will yet be explained. Meantime, depend on us, we will do all we can to aid you."

"Heaven bless you, madam!" he replied, "for the hope, the relief, you have given to

my heavy heart, sinking with the fear — the belief —— "

"Yes, yes," she said kindly, interrupting him, "I understand. Cherish hope, as I do, that all will yet go well! And now as I must still detain you a short time, before I can procure your order of admittance to the Châtelet, I will tell you why I was obliged to avail myself of the services of yourself, and your good steed, in order to reach the frontier of my native France, — why the sister of its King appeared in the comfortless character of an errant and distressed dame. My brother, a prisoner in Spain, had fallen into a state of health so deplorable, that we feared for his life. I hastened to obtain a passport, and permission from the Emperor to visit Madrid. Soon I had the satisfaction to see, that my presence and my nursing had restored his health, and that I had also found means to conciliate and interest in his fate many of the noble and high-

minded Spaniards, who, unlike the wily Emperor with his crooked policy ——"

The lady paused, warned by the painful embarrassment visible on the face of her auditor, and then with a smile continued, "I forgot, noble sir, that you were in the service of the Emperor. I will not make you listen to what you, I suppose, call treason. While I was at Madrid, I was secretly warned by — by a friend, that the kindness and caresses which were bestowed upon me, were but the cloak which concealed a traitorous plan to rob me of my liberty — that on the expiration of the term for which my safe-conduct had been granted, I was to be arrested and confined.

"I had been lulled into such complete security, that when this communication was made to me, I had but five days left, to make the journey from Madrid to the French frontier.

"That I fled at once, and lost no time

which could be saved, you know sir. For Heaven directed that your steps should cross my path, sent you on my road, and detained you by an accident at that miserable *venta*, until I arrived, in order that you, the faithful and trusty servant of the Emperor, (as I doubt not you are) should be ready to defeat his plan, by bearing me safely from those he had sent in pursuit of me. Had I been overtaken and carried back, as I feared, it would have been a dismal day for France, for I bore concealed in the folds of my dress the abdication of the King; by which my country was in a far better position to treat for his ransom.

"Thanks to your loyal devotion to an unknown female, Marguerite de Valois escaped imprisonment, and your imperial master a stain to his reputation no time could have effaced."

As she uttered these words, a tall handsome man, with a martial and dignified air,

entered the room, whom Herman knew to be the King. He had seen him at Pavia, and once at Madrid. He had probably been summoned, for as he entered he said with a gay good-humoured smile, "What needs my daisy of Navarre? what can I do for her?"

The lady advanced to meet him, spoke some time in a low tone. The words Herman did not distinctly hear, but he thought it was a proposal to present him to his Majesty, for the King turned his eyes towards him, as he said, "Surely! yes, but not now, some other time, you know how we are occupied at present — as you say we owe him much, we will not forget the service he has rendered us."

"But the order," she said, "you will give me the order for his admission to the Châtelet."

"Doubtless," he replied, "Duprat shall see to it."

"No, no," she said earnestly, "I must have it now! You will not refuse me this small favour? Come, I will be yoursecretary!"

She took up a pen, hastily wrote a few words on a piece of paper Tornalina had purposely placed within reach, and handed it to him. He signed it, and instantly quitted the room.

"Now, sir," said the Queen turning again to Herman, and presenting the order, "you will, I trust, have no farther difficulty on this head. We will not now detain you longer, but remember you have in us a friend anxious to serve and assist you. When you would see us, ask for the Lady Tornalina, she is the faithful and the ready minister of our will. Keep your courage, and trust, that although the sky be lowering now, sunshine again will come."

Reverently kissing the hand extended to him, Herman departed with a heart once more beating with hope, and silently utter-

ing blessings on the good and noble Marguerite de Valois.

With bounding steps he returned to the *auberge*, to cheer with the good tidings the unhappy Barneck. Together they once again took their way to the Châtelet, and presented the order for admission. The warder looked surprised as he took it. After reading it attentively, instead of admitting them, he returned with it to the Archer's lodge, and Herman saw through the half-open door that three or four men appeared to be consulting over it. After the lapse of a few minutes they were suffered to pass, and Barneck found himself in the presence of his worshipped lady.

From this time things went smoothly on for nearly a week. Every day they presented themselves, one or the other, sometimes both, and were regularly admitted. They held consultations and made arrangements for the approaching trial; and now,

for the first time, Herman voluntarily entered on a discussion of the terrible and mysterious event, from which he had hitherto shrunk with instinctive dread. It was necessary he should know the circumstances attending the disastrous occurrence in order to shape the defence; but Lady Felsenberg refused to enter on the subject.

With a strange pertinacity, which almost argued a shaken intellect, she declared she would have no human help, but would leave her cause to God. If it was the Almighty will that she should be condemned, she would bend to the decree unmurmuring. She should rejoice, she said, if she were acquitted for her children's sake, but she would not seek to save herself by human agency.

"For my children only is it that I grieve, that I fear," she murmured, bursting into tears. "I never hoped, I did not expect ever to have seen you, Herman, again; but

you came. I resigned myself to the will of God, and he sent you to comfort me. Even my little Betta, perhaps——" She paused, the subject was one she feared to touch. With an effort to recover her composure she ceased to weep, and added in a low, but solemn tone, "Whatever is to come, His will be done!"

They had been so engrossed by the deep interest of the terrible subject they were discussing, that they thought not of the auditors to whom the astounding facts implied by their words, were thus abruptly revealed. Their attention was drawn to the two young women by the broken sobs of Gertrude, which alone disturbed the mournful silence which now reigned in the prison chamber.

Blanche shed no tears, but sat pale and still, with an expression of suffering on her face, and a wildness in her eye, that was far more alarming. Herman rose and went to

her. She put her two hands into his, and leaned her head against his side, but spoke not.

"Dear Blanche," he said, kissing the hands with which she grasped his own, "Take courage!"

Tears at length came to relieve her overcharged heart, and she murmured as she wept, "Oh Herman, do *you* take courage! Strive to bear up! It is for you I — I suffer."

Poor Blanche! she had a double portion of misery to endure; for she loved, had always loved, the man to whom she had been betrothed, although so long estranged from him. So cold, so guarded, had her conduct been that he knew it not. But she had watched him with the earnest eye of affection. Had seen him become pale and thin under the pressure of a secret sorrow, which he had told to none. This was now revealed; and with the true sym-

pathy of a gentle nature, and a loving heart, she felt the full extent of what he must have suffered.

Greatly affected by this proof of sensibility on the part of a woman whom he still loved, although he thought she cared not for him, he stood silently beside her, half inclined to ask her why she had blighted the happiness of one for whose sorrows she could still so keenly feel. But at this moment the warder's key grating in the lock, and the creaking of the iron bolts, announced the necessity of separating. With a heavy sigh he quitted her, to bestow a kind caress, and a few words of comfort, on his mother and Gertrude. He left the room, and they felt, as the door closed on him, that they were indeed prisoners.

The next day, and the day after, Herman returned to the prison, but was unable to shake his mother's determination. He then, by the advice of Monsieur de Moleville, the

advocate whom Father Constantin had recommended to conduct the defence, summoned the good Father to a conference; at which Herman stated the case, and requested him to use his influence with Lady Felsenberg, in order to make her take a more reasonable course.

But now affairs took another cross turn. On the following morning, on his presenting himself at the Châtelet, he was again denied admittance. Surprised, he said, "The order is signed by the King. You will not refuse to obey it!"

"We know the order of admission was signed by the King," replied the chief warder, who now presented himself, "And we obeyed it as we were bound to do. But we hold one of a later date, in which we are charged, on our allegiance, not to admit any one to the prisoners until we receive farther instructions."

Thunderstruck at this intelligence, Her-

man silently, and sorrowfully, turned from the gate, and departed to seek the Lady Tornalina, and try to discover the cause of an event so unexpected.

Tornalina, astonished and grieved, hastened to inform her royal mistress. He was immediately admitted to her presence; but she was quite unable to account for the circumstance. "Who can have influenced the King in this affair?" she said. "What motive can have prompted so direct a defiance to my known and expressed wishes on the subject? It is the more unfortunate," she added, "since the King is at Blois. His absence leaves me powerless. I know not what to do."

"Shall I summon Pedrillo, your Highness?" said Tornalina, who stood behind her chair. "He will, at least, be able to ferret out the name of the presumptuous person who has thus dared to brave you."

"Do so," said the Queen.

"Pedrillo!" exclaimed Herman. "Not the Pedrillo who ——"

Tornalina gravely nodded her head in the affirmative, as she left the room, not now disposed to laugh. For affairs appeared to be taking an ill aspect for the protegée of the Queen, who was, of course, her protegée also; as were all who sought refuge from persecution and oppression in the benevolent influence so kindly and steadily exerted by the good Marguerite.

"Yes," she said, in reply to Herman's half uttered question; "Pedrillo the Biscayan *arriero*. He has been some time in our service, and is one of our most useful agents."

"But your Majesty is aware of his treachery?" said Herman.—"That he would ——"

"Yes," she said quietly with a smile. "He would have sold me to your Imperial master. He told me so himself. The

knave is frank enough. He recommended himself first to our notice by his musical talents, which are considerable. He is a clever fellow; he has wit enough to know his own interest; *that* binds him to us. At once crafty, intelligent, and unscrupulous, he aids us in our plans, as a better man neither could nor would do. Such men are but too necessary — indispensable, in the present state of affairs in this country."

Herman looked surprised, but he said nothing. "You would scarcely believe," she continued, "how much good that bad man enables me to do, — traitor and spy, as were the real names he merited when he called himself a muleteer and traveller's guide, over the mountains which separate France from Spain."

As she finished speaking Pedrillo entered, dressed in the green and gold uniform worn by that class of persons known by the name of supernumeraries, and whose occupation

was better understood than capable of definition,—"secret service men," of whom many were retained in almost every nobleman's establishment in France, and a still greater number in royal households, during the sixteenth century.

Pedrillo received his instructions, such explanations as were necessary, and with an earnest injunction to lose no time, and spare no pains in gaining information, was dismissed. Herman departed with him.

As soon as they quitted the royal presence he turned to Herman, and exclaimed with a laugh, "Ha! Señor caballero! we little dreamed of meeting again in this gay city, when we separated in the mountains."

"No," said Herman, dryly; and was about to add something not very flattering, for he was not altogether pleased with the circumstance of having to discuss the domestic interests of his family with this treacherous fellow. But a little reflection

taught him the necessity of submitting quietly to one slight additional misery, among the many greater ones by which he was beset.

After a short conversation, a few questions asked and answered, and some sly observations on the part of the *ci-devant* muleteer, they separated; and Herman returned home to console Barneck as best he might in the new and ugly turn of affairs.

During two whole days he remained in this state of comfortless uncertainty, without intelligence of any sort. The third came, and nearly the whole of this had passed in the same spirit-wearing expectation of news that came not. In the afternoon he sauntered out, and after an absence of two hours returned again. But as he approached the open space on which the inn stood, he was stopped by Fritz, who was watching for him, to warn him not to advance; as some persons of suspicious and

doubtful character had been inquiring for him, and were still lounging about the house. They had come, Fritz said, soon after his departure, and being respectably dressed, like decent citizens, Barneck had answered their questions. But one of the wine-drawers of the house beckoned him aside, and told him he recognised them as *Exempts*, attached to the prison of *Fort-L'Evêque*. "It bodes no good," he said, "to any one whom they inquire for."

In consequence of this intelligence, Herman hastily retreated, and traversed again the streets, for some time undecided what plan to pursue. At length, quite weary, he seated himself on the steps of a church, to rest, and to ruminate. Here he remained till it was dark, when he rose and passed on to the Place de Grève. A number of persons were moving about before the Hôtel de Ville, visible by the light beaming from its windows. The cheerful sounds of

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men's voices, and echoing footsteps, were heard; but as Herman quitted the open space, and dived again down one of the streets leading from it, all was silent, dark, and desolate.

In the Paris of the nineteenth century, some fashionable and favoured quarters are gas-lighted, paved, and watched; and as the civilizing spirits of peace and commerce appear to be gaining ground against the barbarian, and demoralizing genius of war, among our Gallic neighbours, there is hope that, ere long, the blessings of light, cleanliness, and security, may be extended to the great majority of streets which are still dark, dirty, and unsafe. But at the period, the date of my tale, there was no exception to the general rule of darkness, dirt, and danger; and as Herman slowly moved on, he placed his hand on the weapon at his side, trusting to his own strong arm for defence in case of attack. But he passed on unmolested.

The city had sunk to repose, and all was quiet, except now and then the trampling of horses, distant or nearer, as some person of distinction quitting or returning to their *hôtels*, passed along guarded by a band of armed attendants, bearing torches, whose red and flaring light, gleaming brightly for a moment, rendered the succeeding silence and darkness more profound as they disappeared.

Once again he seated himself on some stone steps, determined to wait yet a short time, and then cautiously return, in order to ascertain whether he might safely re-enter the *auberge* from which he had so hastily fled. While he thus sat waiting, his meditation was interrupted by the snarling of some animal near him, — a dog as he supposed; but as it came no nearer, he took no heed of it; but soon after the moon arose and threw a faint light around, and he saw it was a wolf, lapping up the half-dried

blood of the beasts which had been slaughtered before the shop of the butcher who sold their carcasses.

In those days there were no *abattoirs*, none of those excellent regulations which do so much honour to the domestic legislation of the French, and the want of which in our capital city, is a disgrace to us as a civilized people.

But, to return to my tale, the wolf was regaling itself near him, and a little further on two others were gnawing the bones which had been left for these natural scavengers. They growled as he passed, but took no further notice of him, and in a short time he reached again the neighbourhood of his inn. Fritz was on the watch for him, and told him the two men were no longer there.

"But here is another who has come to seek you, *mein Herr!*" said Fritz, "who is no more to be trusted than they; *'s ist der schelm der* —"

"Pedrillo!" exclaimed Herman, joyfully, anticipating a termination to the wearying suspense he had endured for the last three days. "Ya, it is that blackguard, sure enough," said Fritz, not altogether pleased with his master, for the welcome he seemed disposed to give their ancient enemy.

CHAPTER IV.

HERMAN hastily entered, and found Pedrillo stretched out and fast asleep on a wooden settle in the anti-room of his apartment, no longer arrayed in his handsome uniform, but covered with a tattered suit of bygone finery, which had once belonged to a gentleman. As Herman roused him, he exclaimed, "Ha! Señor caballero! I am glad you are come, for I am wasting precious time. Not indeed that a little sleep will do me any harm. I have had none these two nights past, so busy I have been in your service, camarado!"

"Your garments have got a little seedy in my service," said Herman, prudently resolved not to take offence at the impudent familiarity with which he was addressed.

"O! *por Santiago!*" he replied, "it would not do to visit some of my friends with a good coat on my back, unless I had made up my mind to go home without one. But let us to business, Señor; for by all the devils! we have no child's play before us, nor a baby to deal with. We have opposed to us neither more nor less than a man more powerful than the King. We must fight the King's minister and master, the Abbé Duprat. And I have had a hint," he added, while a sullen shade clouded his face, "that if we are beaten in the contest, I shall run the risk of being discarded from a good and profitable service. Then, on the other hand, I am promised great things when we get our kingdom of Navarre. At

present, you know we have only the title, your imperial master kindly regulating its affairs, and receiving its revenues for us. My royal lady will move heaven and earth rather than give up the cause of any one she undertakes to protect."

"This is strange," said Herman. "What interest can the minister have in this affair? Is his love of justice so stern that ——"

"Justice!" interrupted Pedrillo, with a mocking laugh. "By the holy innocents, to whose company you belong, *hermano!* you seem well acquainted with this sinless city, and the doves which build their nests in it. But you will know better by and bye."

"Do you know in what degree of relationship you stand to the house of St. Ange?"

"No," replied Herman. "I know my mother is allied to them, but very remotely

I believe, and we have never had any intercourse with them."

"But you know one of them?"

"No. None!"

"Nor Durochet?"

"Durochet — yes," said Herman. "I know him."

"Durochet St. Ange is your relative, and a principal witness against you in the approaching trial for the murder of another St. Ange, his half brother, (the illegitimate son of his father and an Italian woman,) who called himself the Chevalier de Sablons."

Herman sat listening in silent astonishment, and Pedrillo continued: "It is lucky for you, Señor, that her Highness of Navarre selected *me* in this affair. They are few who have patience and perseverance enough— to say nothing of the address, tact, and knowledge of the world, requisite to dive as I have done into the secret recesses of

men's minds, and brought up their hidden secrets. You see I am already better acquainted with your family and affairs than yourself!

"Now, this Durochet St. Ange is a clever fellow, who knows the world better than — some others I could name. He has wisely resolved to play the jackal, and help the lion to hunt down the prey he could not seize alone. The lion he has chosen is sufficiently strong, being, as I told you, the Abbé Duprat; who, already named for the next red hat that may be vacant, is of course looking like all other cardinals, towards the papal crown.

"Now, the road to Rome being a very expensive one, money is necessary; and as France cannot directly and conveniently supply the great demands made on it at once by the King and the Cardinal, the prudent churchman is obliged to cast about for indirect means of supply, and of course

eagerly prepares to grasp the booty held out to him in this affair. Since a conviction of felony obtained against you, the property belonging to you is confiscated to the state, and naturally falls into his hands."

"This is all nonsense!" said Herman, who had hitherto listened in silence. "I may be—I am ignorant of the mean trickery, and dirty artifices which you say men even of the highest rank resort to here to ensure success to their plans. But I know well that the property of my mother can never be confiscated by the rulers of France, being as it is situated in and belonging to the empire of Germany."

"Your mother is a subject of Francis the First," said Pedrillo doggedly, somewhat nettled by the tone of contempt with which Herman spoke. "A woman follows her husband's class and country. When she married a Frenchman, she became a

Frenchwoman, and though the property in Germany may be safe, all that is here will be forfeit to the crown."

"So be it, we have none in France."

"Humph!" said Pedrillo, "it were better, perhaps, for you Señor, that this were true, for then Monsieur Duprat would scarcely take the trouble to regulate your affairs, and interest himself in them so warmly, as he condescends to do now. But these St. Anges were a wealthy, and once a numerous family. No less than three principal members of it fell at the battle of Pavia. The death of a paralytic old man, and a feeble infant, which happened during the last year, has placed your mother, and Durochet St. Ange, next in succession to the large estates in Languedoc and Guienne, of which your wise relative consents to be satisfied with a portion, abandoning the rest to the lion for the use of his paw. Besides this, as an additional stimulant, Durochet

St. Ange is goaded on by either love or hate; I could not ascertain which. But there is some young female belonging to your family, who has roused strong feelings in his heart, and activity in his brain; which ardently prompt him in his efforts to obtain possession of her person.

"Now, *caballero*, you better know your position: I leave you to judge whether I have been idle during the last three days, and whether you will not need the exertion of all my address, activity, and knowledge of the world, of which you appear to think so little."

The concluding part of this speech was not lost on Herman, for it bore the force of truth; and brought to his recollection the words of the Queen of Navarre, when she said, he aided her as a better man neither could nor would. And aware how necessary such an agent would be in a situation so perplexing as his was now becoming, he

complimented Pedrillo on the extraordinary talent for investigation he had displayed, and thanked him for the exertions he had made to serve him.

Pedrillo had been piqued with the sort of *dehaut-en-bas* and very cavalier style in which he had been treated, and was proportionately flattered by the change in Herman's manner.

There are few men so depraved in taste, (however low their vices may have sunk them) as to be quite indifferent to the approbation of better men. They but affect to despise what in fact they value, but are hopeless of attaining. Pedrillo, a man degraded by early and vicious association, rather than one naturally bad, had too much sense not to know that the high-principled integrity, and unswerving honour of Herman's character, gave him an immense superiority over him, independent of the higher class of society to which he

belonged. Flattered by the commendations, and bound by the condescension Herman now bestowed on him, an *entente cordiale* was established between these moral antipodes, and as the noble simplicity of the rule of right, which governed Herman's actions, developed itself, Pedrillo conceived as great a respect for him as he already entertained for the royal lady whom he served: so that, had the thing been possible, he would surely have become an honest man.

But, alas! his untoward fate had decreed he should best serve them by the exercise of qualities totally in opposition to those by which they were characterized, and he remained, *per force*, a crafty, cunning intriguer, — a clever and powerful agent for good or ill, as those by whom he was employed were well or ill inclined.

Herman now mentioned the men who had been inquiring for him, and his retreat in consequence.

"Yes, yes," said he, "you did right! They are men-catchers. I have put them on a wrong scent, and sent them to dive in distant waters. You are safe for the present, but I recommend you not only to change your quarters but your appearance also. If you will consent to sacrifice your beard, and let me dress you, I will undertake to promise that Lady Felsenberg herself shall not know you."

This was a tremendous sacrifice to require in those days, when a well-trimmed beard was a distinguishing characteristic of a gentleman, the subordinate classes being forbidden by law to wear them. However, it was better to lose his beard than his liberty, and a rendezvous was arranged for the next day, and Pedrillo departed to give an account of his mission to Tornalina, as he had been instructed to do.

The next day Herman quitted the *auberge* as soon as the twilight admitted

of his doing so in safety, and traversed the streets with Fritz, whose appearance was also to undergo a metamorphosis, in order to allow him to remain with his master.

Once or twice, as they hurried on, he fancied that he was followed, that his steps were dogged by two men; and he stopped when he came to an open space, and waited. Almost immediately the two men, whom he had before observed, emerged from the street he had just past, and were joined by a third and two women, who all crossed the place, and disappeared, without bestowing even a glance on him and his man; so that he now believed he had been mistaken, and passed quietly on his way.

Not much acquainted with Paris, he paused at the entrance of a narrow street, to inquire, not quite decided whether to enter it or not, when he and Fritz were at once struck at from behind, and were soon engaged in a fierce contest with three men,

who, he doubted not, were those by whom he had been followed, although he had neither light nor leisure to examine them.

Notwithstanding that the attack was unexpected and the numbers unequal; yet, so fast and heavy fell the blows from the practised and vigorous arms of the two young soldiers, that very soon one of their antagonists was stretched on the earth. He was probably their best man, for the others fled in dismay from the now unequal contest, although two opposed to two; bearing with them, however, some slight memorials of the fray.

Without waiting to ascertain the state of the wounded man, Herman again pushed on a few steps, but paused again in doubt, and looked round for some one to question. A woman was standing in the porch of a church, faintly lighted by the tapers burning on the altar, and gleaming athwart the street. To her he applied, and she civilly

replied she was going that way, and would show them the place they sought. As they walked on, she asked the name of the house to which they were going: on hearing it she said, "That is singular, it is the place to which I also am going. I belong to the house."

Rejoicing in this piece of good fortune they went on together through several streets and alleys, in one of which she stopped, and drawing a key from her pocket opened a low door.

"This is the house," she said; "what is the name of the person you wish to see?"

Herman mentioned the *sobriquet* Pedrillo had thought proper to bestow on himself. "Oh, it is him you want. In that case you will require a private room, but we must pass through the public one to it."

He made no objection, and they followed her down some steps through a narrow pas-

sage, into a large dungeon-like room with rough walls and an earthen floor, dimly lighted by an iron lamp suspended over a long oaken table, around which sat ten or a dozen dirty, slovenly, and wretched looking men, in ragged clothes, with the exception of one or two, who were dressed in the fashion of the day, and probably intended to represent gentlemen. Among them sat also a few fierce drabbish unsexed women. The table was covered with bottles, jugs, horn and earthen cups. As they entered, a most uproarious chorus saluted their ears, of singing, swearing, and chattering, but which partially subsided in curiosity at the sight of strangers; who, as they passed, were keenly examined by some of them. They had however but little time for investigation, for the woman went quickly on to a door at the other end, entered a smaller chamber, round which hung male and female garments, from some of which, doubtless,

their disguise was to be furnished, Herman thought, as he looked at them.

From this room they went on to a third, where she stopped, lighted a lamp which stood on a table in the middle, and pointing to some wooden seats, said, "You can remain quietly here till he comes, but you must order something to drink for the use of the room; for we don't give private quarters to every body, but he is a customer. We have as good wine and brandy as France can produce."

A bottle of wine was ordered, and brought in by the woman, who drew the cork and filled two horn measures. Herman was busily occupied in binding up with his handkerchief a slight wound on the hand of Fritz, from which, however, he had lost a good deal of blood. Having finished his operation, he now, for the first time, looked closely at her, and was instantly struck with the strong resemblance her

general appearance bore to one of the two he had noticed, as they joined the men who had followed him. Suspicion thus awakened, he turned hastily to Fritz to prevent his drinking the wine; he was too late.

Heated and thirsty, from the conflict in which they had been engaged, and perhaps somewhat lowered by the loss of blood, which had been freely flowing during their walk, Fritz had eagerly seized, and quickly swallowed, the welcome draught.

Now on his guard, Herman watched the woman as he placed the horn, he had raised to his lips, again on the table, and fancied she looked disappointed that it was still full. Thinking it best, in a situation so embarrassing as his was now becoming, to temporize, he asked for some bread, and as she quitted the room with a lingering and reluctant step, and her eyes fixed upon him, he raised the horn again to his

mouth and pretended to drink, but, as soon as she closed the door, he threw the wine on the brick floor, beneath the table.

She was absent nearly half an hour, and before she returned, Fritz had exhibited such signs of a heavy drowsiness that he could no longer doubt the fact of the wine being drugged; and the terrible conviction arose, that he had been entrapped into a den of thieves, assassins perhaps, and was now at their mercy, unaided and alone. The better to observe this woman, and to throw her off her guard, he laid his head on the table, as if overpowered with sleep, but in such a position that he could see all she did.

Scarcely had he placed himself, when she opened the door, put the bread on the table, and taking up the bottle, raised it to the light, to see how much remained. Apparently satisfied, she again quitted the room, and Herman rose, to see if it were possible

to rouse Fritz, and make an effort to force a passage to the street.

It was not possible: he was completely stupified, and at length fell like a log on the floor, where he lay senseless and motionless. He quitted him in despair, and tried the door: it was fastened, as he expected. He turned to the window, — hopelessly indeed, for he had seen, on entering, that it was secured by iron bars; but this had then created no suspicion or surprise, being the ordinary arrangement of every dwelling in those turbulent and lawless times, when the only protection for his person and his property a man could hope for, was in the strength of his own right arm, and the bolts and bars on his doors and windows.

In this forlorn and desperate position Herman remained another half hour, when the sound of approaching footsteps roused his attention; and he rejoiced, for no certainty could be worse than the horrible sus-

pense which had lengthened the half hour to an age. He had no longer any doubts to clear up: suspicion had become certainty; but he again laid his head on the table, as if asleep.

Once more the hateful woman entered, who, however, was neither old nor ugly, and wholly unlike the fierce-looking wretches he had seen as he passed. She bore on her face no traces of the ferocity and intemperance by which theirs were brutalized, nor even of the cunning with which she had lured the young men to these haunts of vice and misery. On the contrary, the expression of her face was gentle and feminine, but melancholy, with a restless and uneasy eye. This time she came not alone: she was followed by a tall man of good figure, and of martial bearing, clad in a somewhat faded and shabby uniform of one of those numerous bands of mercenaries who were retained in the pay of the King and the noblesse of France.

They stood a moment silent after their entrance, when the woman said, in a gentle and humble voice, "There they are, Captain. You see you would have no trouble if you would do me this favour."

"Curse you for a fool, woman!" he replied fiercely; "I am a thief and a gentleman, not a butcher. I cut purses, not throats. Set your own blackguards on to them, or do it yourself. The band of jolly companions to which I belong attack openly the man who shows a well-filled purse at his girdle, and fight fairly till they get it, like honest men. But they don't use their swords to carve up drunken sots, as if they were porkers, or drill holes in their bodies to let out their blood, as if they were broaching a wine cask."

"Our men are all out," she said, in the same humble, deprecating tone. "If you would only bind them, and prevent their making a noise. We only want to secure

them. We have had great trouble to get hold of them, and they are so fierce and strong that——"

"Bind them," he exclaimed, again interrupting her with a strange oath, "that thy fellows may finish them at their leisure! I tell thee no, daughter of the devil! Set some of the tatterdemalions to work. I saw more than one in *La Grande Cave*, as I came through, who will do the job for a quart of brandy."

"Oh, we never trust fellows like them with our secrets: they would betray us. It might get to the ears of the King. It was because I know you to be a man of honour, Captain, that I mentioned it to you."

She paused a moment, then added, in a tone still more gentle and insinuating, "I know you are a gentleman, and a man of honour, and I could afford to pay you well, Captain Miraflores. I should not grudge fourteen or fifteen crowns."

This was a large sum in those days. The

offer evidently shook the gentleman's resolution, for he audibly muttered, "This devil's dam knows that I have not a *denier* left in my pouch; just now, too, when I am most in need of it."

"Fifteen crowns, and my best wine!" she repeated, seeing the impression she had made.

A short silence ensued, when he vehemently exclaimed, "Say twenty, and it shall be done. May the devil fly away with the beldame that set me such a task! Hark ye, Mother *Mau-de-vie*, I'll have the money and the wine beforehand."

"You shall, Captain," she said, as she left the room, to which she quickly returned with a canvass bag and two bottles of wine, which having placed on the table she again hurried out, as if she feared to see the result of her negotiation.

The Captain was not slow in finishing one of the bottles of wine, and uncorking the

other. In the short intervals between his draughts he muttered in a discontented voice; but Herman heard no words distinctly till he burst forth with a volley of his own peculiar and extravagant oaths, and ended with, "May I be —— if I do! No; I'll rouse them up, and make them fight for their lives. They'll be two to one against me. I shall then send them off on their long journey comfortably, and not in this nasty way, disgracing the blue blood of Spain which my father put into my veins."

It was not necessary to exert himself in rousing one of the apparent sleepers; for, on turning his face, which had been averted during his soliloquy, to his great astonishment, the bright, clear, intelligent eye of Herman met his own, and he impulsively placed his hand on the weapon at his side. But, stretching forth his hand with an air of friendly familiarity, Herman said, "You are too brave a man, Captain Miraflores, to

be employed in a dirty work like this; but Fortune has been a fickle jade to you. Aid me in getting out of this den, and you shall have a bag of crowns that will weigh down two such as this."

"Say you so, comrade? By ——, it's a bargain! But no!" said the Captain, the hilarity which shone for a moment on his face suddenly giving way to discontent and perplexity; "no: I have taken the hell-cat's wages, and *must* do her work!"

"Give her back her crowns!" said Herman, gaily, now animated with the hope of a speedy release from a place where his strength, address, and courage, great as they were, were wholly inadequate to guard his life. "Tell her you have changed your mind. Surely a gentleman has a right to think twice on a subject!"

"By the fame of my ancestors, you are right! and I will do so," exclaimed the Captain. "If you are a lad of a true breed,

as I am sure you are, we will march through an army of her bullies, if she sets them on us, and knock their brains out with the bag of crowns!"

The treaty of alliance arranged, the next question was, what was to be done with Fritz, who still lay motionless on the *carreaux* where he had fallen. Herman was very unwilling to leave him in such a place; yet to carry him out would be rash and imprudent, since they must pass through *La Grande Cave*, where were assembled fourteen or fifteen desperate wretches, who would doubtless dispute their passage, if instructed to do so by the Circe who reigned in these regions of darkness.

"Trust me, comrade, he is safe enough if we succeed in making good our retreat. The master free, they will not venture to touch the man!" said the Captain.

Herman thought this a reasonable argu-

ment, and they prepared to sally forth. The door opened, and at it stood Circe herself. She had been listening, greatly perplexed. She had been prepared for a few sharp cries, a wild uproar, or total silence. But the quiet murmur of calm voices, (which the thick door allowed her to hear, though not to distinguish the words they uttered,) she could by no means comprehend.

CHAPTER V.

As the door opened upon her suddenly, she saw two men erect and living, where she had only looked for one, and, without staying to question the Captain, she turned to fly; but he seized her by the arm and drew her into the chamber, pale and shaking with terror.

"Now, Mother Midnight!" he said, quietly, "you have saved us the trouble of looking for you. This gentleman is a friend of mine, and is willing to pay me double to do the same good turn for you, which you intended for him; so ——".

"Oh, mercy! mercy! spare my life! Do

not kill me," screamed the wretched woman, sinking at Herman's feet, and wildly clasping his knees. "Oh, good, kind, young sir, spare my life! We were offered a great sum to secure you. My son — my poor Michel is in the galleys. We thought,— we hoped——They told us three hundred crowns would get him out. My poor Michel, he loved me, and was a good lad and innocent, but they swore away his liberty, and sent him to the galleys. And I — I was once kind and gentle-hearted; but they took away my child; — and — and ——"

The wild vehemence with which she had begun to plead for her life seemed to have exhausted her strength. Her voice became hoarse, and sunk into an inarticulate murmur. But her hands still grasped his knees, and her wild and glaring eyes were still fixed on his face.

As Herman looked at, and listened to the

miserable creature, the feelings of disgust and contempt with which he at first regarded her, gave place to deep unmitigated compassion. Instead of roughly pushing her out of his way, as he had been about to do, he raised the sinking wretch, placed her on a seat, and held her till she revived from the half-fainting state into which she had fallen.

He spoke gently and kindly to her, assuring her he had no wish to injure her. She burst into a passionate fit of tears and sobs, and again threw herself at his feet, exclaiming, "Oh, forgive me! forgive me! It grieved me, oh yes, it grieved me, to do what I did. But when I thought of my poor Michel, only sixteen, and how they had destroyed him ——"

Choked by grief she stopped, and Herman, greatly moved, said, "Take comfort, poor unhappy mother. I pledge my word that I will do my utmost to release your son.

If three hundred crowns will do it, it shall be done!"

Her tears and sobs suddenly ceased. She gazed earnestly on his face, but her own expressed doubt and astonishment. "You — you will not — you cannot," she stammered.

"Yes, yes! I can, I will!" he replied.

"Swear it!" she said, rising and standing erect, animated by the same wild energy she had before displayed. "Swear it!" she repeated in a deep and solemn tone, "by that God in whom *you* still believe, and have not renounced and cursed, as *I* have done!"

Inexpressibly shocked and affected, Herman raised his right arm and said, "I do swear, in the presence of that God before whom we both stand, to exert every means in my power to release your son! and let the circumstance of his having sent one able and willing to serve you, convince you

that however wicked you may have been, you are not yet abandoned, — that the Almighty Being will pardon and bless a repentant sinner!"

The woman listened with deep and earnest attention, while a rapid alternation of fear, sorrow, doubt, passed over her pallid face, and then it was lighted up with hope and joy; and she said in a low and gentle voice, "May God bless *you*, sir! and he will bless you, for you have saved *me*, body and soul!"

While this strange but impressive scene was passing, the Captain stood looking on with a grave face, not wholly unmoved, "albeit unused to the melting mood," and now placed the bag of crowns on the table, intimating to the woman that she was to take them back. But this she refused to do, and Herman watched with some curiosity the result of the contest.

The honesty of the gentleman thief was

victorious—the blue blood triumphed; for he thundered out, with another of his most unique oaths, "Take it, woman! and keep it if you can. But don't use it again to put your soul and mine into the clutches of Satan!"

A few necessary questions relative to Michel having been answered, they were again about to depart. The woman raised the lamp to light them, but instantly replaced it on the table, and listened. With a frightened look she rushed towards the door, which stood ajar; but it was thrown open ere she reached it, and two men entered supporting between them a third grievously wounded. In the savage countenance of the foremost, Herman recognised one of those by whom he had been attacked. He also was known. A fierce eye glared on him, and his sword was instantly in his hand; but, before it was fairly out of the sheath, a dagger gleamed in the light of the

lamp. The woman sprang forward with a wild scream, and received the blow intended for him in her side. "Spare him! save him!" she exclaimed to the man on whom she had thrown herself, and to whose arm she still clung to prevent his striking again, regardless of the blood which was flowing fast from her wound. "Spare him! save him! He has sworn to get Michel released. Sworn! sworn! He can, he will!" she added, speaking rapidly, and eagerly watching the working muscles of his face, ghastly with strangely mingled and fiercely contending passions.

Grief, love, hatred, and revenge, were all portrayed upon it; as he stood alternately looking on the enemy before him, and the wife he had wounded. It was her husband, the father of Michel, whose deadly aim she had intercepted in defence of a life now more precious to her than her own. A

momentary pause ensued, during which he appeared undecided whether to give way to the fierce or the gentle feelings, which seemed to govern by turns. Whether the decision was at all influenced by the ready weapons of the two gentlemen, and their military mien, which spoke them practised in their use, is not sure; but his countenance softened into a quieter expression, and he said, "Poor Michelette! I fear thou hast got an ugly cut. It was not meant for thee. Why didst thou fling thyself on a dagger thirsty for blood,—but not for thine, poor wench?"

"To save him—to stop you. He will release our poor Michel," she answered hurriedly, in fear of a fresh attack from the half-subdued ferocity which still struggled for mastery.

He glanced, scowling and doubtful, at Herman, and then at the Captain, whom he

appeared to know, for he said, "Will you answer for him, Captain? Is it not gammon and trickery?"

"I *will* answer for him," he replied; "and what is more, if you strike at him again, I will help him to make mince-meat of you all! Some of you seem to have had the work half done for you already," he added, glancing at the wounded man they had brought in, who during the contest had contrived to crawl into a corner.

This was an impolitic and ill-judged speech. The man's eye flared again with rage; and the woman eagerly called out, "Go away, gentlemen; go away! Take the lamp and go!" Then, sinking from agitation and loss of blood, she relaxed the grasp she had hitherto so tenaciously maintained on her husband's arm, and fell on the floor.

The savage man was now again subdued: he raised the woman and held her in his

arms; but, finding she was still pale and senseless, her dress wet with her blood, he believed she was dead, and gave way to a burst of bitter grief. Herman, assuring him she had only fainted, assisted him to lay her on the table, which was soon confirmed by a surgeon, who came to look after the wounded man, in obedience to directions left at his house.

Their attention was now drawn to Fritz, who had been wholly forgotten in the absorbing interest excited by the strange events which had so rapidly succeeded each other. But Fritz, though unthought of, had taken his share in the adventures of the evening, and had undergone a considerable shampooing in kicks and trampling, which had so beneficial an effect on him as partially to rouse his dormant faculties, and make him show such signs of life, as gave his master hopes of being able to get him on his legs again. In this, after

a time, they succeeded; and left, at length, this abode of misery and sin.

As they passed through the outer door, the chimes of the churches were sounding. It was near midnight. The moon, almost full, was brightly shining, and all seemed calm and still. Soon as they emerged from the narrow streets on to the banks of the Seine, the gentle rippling of its waters, on which the moonbeams seemed to sleep, beating against their bounds, formed a strong contrast to the stormy scenes of fierce contention in which they had recently been engaged. It seemed to Herman to bring refreshment to his feverish frame, and a holy calm to his weary and harassed spirit. Even the Captain was not wholly insensible to its influence: he was silent, and appeared to be thinking (an unusual occupation with him) for he said, after a long pause, "That Mother *Mau-de-vie* has still some woman-nature left, spite of her life and calling."

"Much! alas too much, poor soul!" replied Herman. "That woman-nature, as you call it, the strong impulse of affection, uncontrolled by reason or education, it is that has led her into crime."

The scenes he had so lately passed through had made a deep impression on his mind, and he was about to give expression to the ideas which were crowding through his brain. But recollecting the old adage, that "it is foolish to speak Latin to a dog," which he believed he was then doing, seeing that his observations were addressed to the gallant purse-cutting Captain Miraflores, he therefore changed the subject for one more fitting, and they soon after parted, with an arrangement to meet the next day.

It was now too late to expect Pedrillo would be found at the place of rendezvous: he therefore took his way with Fritz back to the *auberge* from which he had departed

some hours before, to go through such a course of adventures as he had by no means anticipated when he quitted it; and which had so thoroughly wearied him, body and mind, as nearly to drive from his recollection the distressing perplexities in which he and his were involved. Heavily he threw himself on his bed and slept.

In the morning he arose early, expecting that Pedrillo would come to inquire the reason of his having failed to meet him, as agreed. But the only visit he received was from the gallant Captain Miraflores, who, charmed with the punctuality with which the forty crowns were paid, swore, in his own peculiar phraseology, to dedicate his sword and his services to his new friend; and to carve up without mercy all who should attempt to injure him. The Captain departed, but no Pedrillo came, for he was detained by the royal lady he served.

Having made his report to Tornalina, he

had been summoned to repeat in person his account, and was then dismissed with orders to wait for instructions. As the door of the private cabinet in which she was sitting closed on him, and she found herself alone with the young Spaniard, she said, "I am vexed and annoyed by this affair, and know not what to do. I had not looked for an opponent so powerful as Duprat. I have it much at heart to serve this young man, who so loyally aided me, in *my* hour of difficulty and danger. Never will I abandon him while he is thus beset by peril and perplexity."

She now sat some time silent and thoughtful, and so absorbed by her meditations that a burning brand fell from the gilded andirons on the hearth, and rolled to her feet without rousing her. Tornalina replaced it, and then ventured to say, "Monsieur Duprat will not dare to act in defiance of your wishes and the will of his Majesty."

"Ah, Tornalina!" she replied, "even now, after a two years' residence with us, you know but little of courts, of state intrigues, or the way in which kingdoms are governed. My brother is nominally King of France, but the minister governs it. Profuse in his expenditure, guided by rapacious and unprincipled people, he is always needy; and cannot get money but through the extraordinary expedients of Duprat, to supply the double drain on the exchequer, of his own and the King's demands; for he also has a master in the Pope, who lays all his vassals under contribution. This crafty Clement is, in fact, the actual monarch whose will rules France, although François wears the crown. Were it not so, these frightful and atrocious cruelties could not take place, — these wholesale butcheries, which are executed in the name of law, on the tortured and harassed disciples of Luther. Were not the King bound hand

and foot by the merciless bigots of Rome, would he suffer these disgraceful ——"

Suddenly she paused, as if aware of the imprudence of speaking so freely on state affairs. Fixing her eyes on the young Spaniard who was gazing at her with an astonished, but grave and anxious face, after a momentary examination of Tornalina's expressive features, she exclaimed, "Thou *art* true to me, maiden. Thou wilt not abuse the confidence I so fully repose in thee, nor make an ill use of the knowledge thus obtained. No, no: I know thou wilt not. Thou hast too often shown thy true and honest heart, in aiding me to save these poor victims of persecution."

"True to you! betray you, Madam! Oh, royal lady, have I merited such words as these?" she said, in a sorrowful tone. "Unhappy that I am! nearly two years have I served you, and you have yet to ask

whether you may safely utter your thoughts before me."

"No, no. I never have, I never will doubt thy love and loyalty, maiden!" said the Queen. "It would bring me bitter grief to do so. I took a fancy for thee, damsel, when I first saw thee," she continued, with one of her own sweet smiles, as she caressed the lovely girl kneeling at her feet. "I took a fancy to thee, and often have I thanked Heaven for sending me to those dreary mountains, where I found my true and faithful friend,—a blessing seldom accorded to persons of exalted rank, the idols of courts, where all is false and hollow. Oh, Tornalina! I am often sick at heart, and weary of the world, when I think how it is governed; when I see the good suffer, and the wicked triumph. A source of heavy sorrow to me is, to see the King, a brother whom I have always loved and striven to serve — to see him sink the

monarch in the man of pleasure, and sacrifice the dignity and power of his realms, the welfare of his subjects, to the aggrandizement and gratification of his mistresses, and the splendid but heartless nobles of his court. To know that his name will go down to posterity as a weak Prince, unable to protect his subjects: suffering them to be tortured and slaughtered, at the will and dictation of a foreign potentate. When I think how he suffered that unprincipled Duprat and — another — another whom I must not name, to hunt down, to ruin and destroy that great and distinguished man, who would have been a bulwark to his kingdom, and a guardian to the people, the Constable, Prince Charles of Bourbon."

"The Constable Bourbon!" exclaimed Tornalina, astonished. "A rebel — a traitor!"

"Yes," she said, with an expression of profound sorrow on her face, "he *was* a

rebel and a traitor,—the enemy of France, —a fearful enemy; for he half ruined it. But he who had power to do so much against, what would he not have done for it? For he loved his country,—yes, devotedly, enthusiastically as myself, was he once bound to France. Never did a truer heart beat in a man's bosom. Never was an abler head or more distinguished courage devoted to a country's welfare and prosperity, than those which animated Charles of Bourbon. Ardently he loved his native land. Ably would he have defended it. But he was goaded to desperation, almost to frenzy, by persecution the most bitter, unrelenting, and remorseless. He was degraded, insulted, and ruined, because he did not feel, and would not feign love—love for—one who had power over the King, or aid the ambitious minister's schemes of plunder. Because he did love, fondly, faithfully, one who—who knew and valued

the high qualities of his heart and head. True to the object of his affection, he stood alone amid the nobles of a dissolute court, unshaken by the blandishments of the beautiful, but light females by whom it was filled. He, like her he loved, had a better taste than to find gratification in the heartless liaisons, where the senses, the animal passions only, were engaged. Oh, when I think of my early days, of the dreams of my youth! what I hoped from the union of two such men as François and Bourbon! How often we discussed and triumphed in the future glory of France, which was to result from the united efforts of a prosperous and contented people! When I think of these bright visions, and look on the events which have passed, and those which are now passing round me, my heart is heavy, and my spirit weary."

"The great Constable did not marry the lady he was attached to?" said Tornalina

"No," she replied; "they were separated, sacrificed, both of them; and passed years as the living tied to the dead might do. But time passed on, and both again were free. They met again, but under such circumstances as —— Oh, it was a terrible, a cruel meeting — at Madrid! He had attained the fearful distinction of having half ruined his country, and made his King a prisoner. He sought an interview, to warn her of treachery. The unhappy man still loved the woman on whom he had bestowed his early and unfading affection — still hoped — since both again were free."

The lady paused, burst into tears, and laying her head on Tornalina's shoulder, wept for some time in silence, when she continued, in a tremulous and broken voice, "Oh, Tornalina! may your gentle heart never know the pangs by which mine were torn, during that last meeting, and — and after the siege of Rome, when Captain

Jonas, his faithful friend, came to tell me the last request he had made was, that the white scarf I had given him, and which he had worn in the battle, should be buried with him. That scarf which I had embroidered with silver threads, in early, happy days, dyed in his blood, was placed in his coffin. My name was on his lips as he ceased to breathe. — Leave me, Tornalina: let no one enter!"

The warm-hearted girl retired, weeping with the truest sympathy for the sorrows of the noble lady she served, and on returning to her, was pleased to find her again calm and composed. "Now, Tornalina," she said, "we will talk of these things no more: princes should have no hearts. I will endeavour to forget I am a woman, and remember only that I am a Queen. Tell me, damsel, canst thou think of no plan — thou art quick-witted enough — canst thou devise no way to circumvent

this cunning Duprat, and help our protegé?"

"I know not," she replied, hesitating, "unless — unless Mademoiselle de Heilly would take up the affair. They say she influences his Majesty, and——"

"Yes, truly does she, and thereby augments the craving necessities which make the minister omnipotent."

After a little pause Tornalina said, "It is their estates, it seems, which Monsieur Duprat covets. If Count Herman and Lady Felsenberg were willing to relinquish them——"

"Ha, thou art right, maiden!" exclaimed the Queen, catching at the idea. "We will try what may be done. In ordinary circumstances, this would be a tremendous sacrifice; but, situated as they now are, I think they cannot hesitate. If they consent to satisfy the cupidity of the minister, I will send some one with tact and address to feel his

pulse, and drop a hint to that effect. And yet—" she said, pausing to consider, "this is a shameful concession to vice, thus to feed the grasping avarice of this man. Would that the King were here; I would not thus give way: but as it is — summon Pedrillo."

Pedrillo came, received his instructions, went off, and speedily returned with a ready acquiescence on the part of Herman, and an assurance that his mother would not refuse her assent to the proposal. This, then, was arranged, and Pedrillo was about to depart, when she said, "Ah, I had nearly omitted an important commission! Thou must seek out that student of Orleans, Jean Calvin, who, they say, is now in Paris. Warn him that he is in jeopardy, and will do well to fly. There is no safety for him in France. He hath drawn the public attention to his writings, and his doctrines are displeasing to the Church. The eye of

Rome is on him. We cannot protect him: we have little power in France now to protect any one. Please God, things will go otherwise when we are safely seated in our little kingdom. And thy friend, Clement Marot, warn him too that he is too bold of speech, and that he must also clip the wings of his verses, that they fly not so high as to touch the pinnacles of the Church, lest they bring down its thunder on the poet's head.

"And now, maiden," she said, as Pedrillo closed the door, "we must dismiss from our thoughts all these affairs in which our feelings and our affections are interested, and deck ourselves for a state reception; put on our courtly countenance, a needful mask to hide what we do, and exhibit what we do not, think and feel; and enable us to distribute our artificial smiles as policy and state necessities require. Go see that the wardrobe women have all ready for a *grande toilette*. We must be magnificently arrayed,

and look like a Queen, for we have much to do for the interests of Navarre: powerful men, with weak minds, to conciliate, who are only to be led by making an impression on their senses."

CHAPTER VI.

MEANTIME, Pedrillo again sought Herman, with whom he was now on better terms, and had learned to treat him with more respect. While Herman had held himself at a lofty distance, he had been flippant and familiar, struggling, as it were, against the contempt with which he was regarded. But no sooner did the gentleman descend a little from his altitude than this member of a subordinate class met his condescension with a proportionate deference in his manner, and a warmer interest in his affairs.

Herman had now, for the first time,

leisure to occupy himself with the concerns of the wretched creatures whose existence had become known to him by the peril in which they had placed his own. Relying on the sagacity of his companion for assistance, he now related his adventures, and the promise he had made to pay the sum necessary for the bribery of justice, to ensure the release of the convict. "I am the more anxious to liberate him," he said, "inasmuch as I was solemnly assured he had been unjustly condemned."

"Oh yes, it is like enough," replied Pedrillo. "He was poor and friendless, and therefore probably took the place of the rogue who had wherewithal to purchase protection. But three hundred crowns is a large sum. If I knew where to lay my hand on him, I could find you a man who is in the habit of arranging these sort of negotiations. He would save time and trouble, and, what is better, get through it for half

the money. I know some of his haunts; shall we go seek him? We can do no more in your own affairs till my royal lady has tried her plan. You are reluctant to part with your beard; suppose you put on a monk's frock. The cowl is often found convenient to laymen, as well as to priests."

Herman assented, and they departed in search of the necessary disguise, and then repaired to a *cabaret* in the suburb St. Antoine, another of those second-rate houses of entertainment of a somewhat equivocal character, although infinitely superior to the wretched den into which he had been entrapped by the miserable Michelette. Here the large room was tolerably clean, well lighted, and wore an air of cheerfulness; the blazing logs in the chimney throwing a warm glow on the paving tiles of the floor, — the more welcome, as the night was very cold.

The company, too, about twelve or four-

teen persons, all men, seated round the long table, did not belong to that degraded class which frequented the other, but held a much higher rank in society, as Pedrillo assured his companion. *La Grande Cave* was one of the lowest description, whereas the *Sword without a Scabbard*, where they now were, was one of the most respectable. This was in some degree confirmed by the appearance of the assembled company, who, notwithstanding the shabby poverty of the garments of many of them, were almost all distinguished by something of a military air; and some of them looked like gentlemen, though of a rakish and dissolute character.

As Herman and Pedrillo approached the table, which was covered with bottles, cups, and the remains of a supper, they were in high debate, as appeared by the animation of their faces and the loud tones of their voices. Among them Herman quickly recognised his friend, Captain Miraflores, who

exclaimed, with his own happy originality in the invention of strange and extravagant oaths, "By ——! you may say what you will about the low and ungentlemanlike arts of clerkly learning, but I maintain it would be better if the Commander-in-chief of the King's armies could read and write, for many reasons!"

"Poh, poh! nonsense!" said a dark-visaged, fierce-looking man, opposite, with a smile of contempt. "What does a brave man want with the craft of the priest? A soldier's pen is his sword, his ink is the blood of his enemy, and his heart the tablet on which he writes. Montmorency knows nothing of such childish tricks, and where will you find a better man to command an army?"

"Bourbon was as brave a man, and a better soldier, and *he* knew these childish tricks!" said the Captain. "A sad day for France was it when he fell. It would have

been better had that accursed *coup d' arquebuse* struck down the King. Another King might have been found, but not another Bourbon."

"He was proud and haughty, and often treated ill those under him; but he knew how to hide his failings from the world, and to blazon his fame. He did not fall by a *coup d' arquebuse!*" said the dark-visaged man.

This speech produced a clamorous altercation, which was at length subdued by the efforts of two or three peacemakers, who saw the discussion was tending to a storm. And one of them, the more effectually to change the subject, burst forth with a lively air, and soon their voices were joining in chorus of "Chantons! chantons! chantons!" as he sung,—

Ho! le bon Saint Eloi, quand il voit que le Roi,
N'avait pas encore mis sa culotte à l'endroit,
"Pour l'amour du bon Dieu," il lui orie, "oh grand Roi,
Mettez vite, je vous prie, la culotte à l'endroit!"
Chantons! chantons! chantons!

"Comment donc," dit le Roi, "es tu fou, que tu veux,
A la Cour, au Palais que je mette le feu ?"
"Ne vois tu, partout, dans l'entourage des Rois,
Tout est à l'envers — pas une chose à l'endroit ?"
Chantons ! chantons ! chantons !

This was followed by another in the same style, when an application was made to a man who had hitherto sat silent and unnoticed, but who, having by his side a stringed instrument, was thereby announced as a musician.

But in vain was he entreated for a touch of his art. He either did not or would not understand them, for he made no reply.

Herman's attention being thus drawn to him, he looked at the man and thought he recognised an Englishman, known by the name of Willy the songster, who came to Fenton Manor-house, sometimes with music, sometimes with fish, and occasionally with articles of secret sale, and confidential barter: for there were fiscal regulations in

those days as there are now; and then, as at the present day, if they did no other good, and did vex the lieges, they at least served for the creation, and comfortable maintenance, of that excellent and enterprising body of men called smugglers.

Herman, moving to the side of this man, spoke to him in English, inquiring what had brought him there, and why he refused to play or sing. The sulky and dissatisfied air of his countenance cleared up a little at the sound of his native language, although uttered with a foreign accent, and by a stranger. He replied, that he had been brought over and was detained in France against his will, as a witness on a trial that was about to take place.

"And as to singing," he said, "they would no more understand me, than I do them, and I am not in a humour to be merry."

"Never mind! give them one of those dismal old Saxon romances you

used to sing to the people at Fenton Manor."

"Ha! do you know Fenton Manor?" said the man surprised.

"Come, let us have one of your famous ditties," said Herman, evading the question. He tuned his instrument, and struck up a prelude so wild and singular that every voice was hushed in listening silence, as he sung to oblige the man who had won his good will by greeting his ear with the sound of his mother tongue, and who alone, probably, of all the assembly, understood the meaning of his lay of,

THE LAIDLY* BRIDE.

The Laidly she loved a Marchman† bold,
Her eyes they were so dazzled by his aurnaments‡ of gold,
That she did not see, what he would not tell,
'Twas her fair broad lands that he loved so well.
But the owl it hooted from the ruined tower,
The raven spoiled their wooing.

* Laidly, ugly.

† Marchman, Marcher, Warden of the Marches or Borders; Marquess. ‡ Aurnaments, golden badges indicating rank.

The strings of Willy's instrument gave so accurately the *Whoo-hoo-hooing* of the owl, and the raven's croak, that a shout burst simultaneously from the whole company, succeeded by loud laughter and cries of "*Encore! encore!*" Willy went on.

The Laidly she decked herself as a bride,
She stood in the church by the bridegroom's side,
But she did not see, and he would not tell,
'Twas the bride's maiden that he loved too well.
But the owls were hooting from the ruined tower,
The raven spoiled their wooing.

Right fair to see in her maiden pride,
Was that lovely one by the Laidly's side,
And she knew not, what he would not tell,
That lawless love is a fiendish spell.
But the owls were hooting from the ruined tower,
The raven spoiled their wooing.

Having finished the first part of his wild song, the musician stopped and laid down his instrument. But Herman, who knew he had not given them the whole, and seeing Pedrillo greatly interested by the air and the style of singing, so wholly new to him, begged of him to go on. Pedrillo himself, at the same time, officiously filling Willy's cup with his own good wine, made

signs to him to continue, by taking up the harp and putting it into his hands again. The wine, lavishly supplied, did not fail to do its part, and after emptying his cup a time or two, he continued with the second part of the Saxon Romance.

Not many were the months passed over and gone,
When again in the church stood the lovely one,
For the Laidly dame was beneath the sod,
The lovely one in her place had trod ;
But her face was pale, for she knew too well,
A tale that she would not — dare not tell.
While the owl was hooting from the ruined tower,
The raven spoiled their wooing.

The bride was changed, but the groom was the same,
Who once again to the altar came ;
But his heart was sad, for a withering spell
Blighting his joy, from his conscience fell.
While the owl it hooted from the ruined tower,
The raven spoiled his wooing.

Straining his ear for the merry marriage bell,
Solemn and slow comes the passing knell ;
While his arms, which in love he had stretched so wide,
Enfolded the first and the Laidly Bride,
In the clothes of the grave, with a mouldering smell,
He clasps once again one he knows too well :
While the owls were hooting from the ruined tower,
The raven spoiled their wooing.

Now the three are laid in the marble tomb,
To wait for the awful day of doom.
Stop, Christian pilgrim, stay and tell
Thy beads for the guilty souls who ——

Ere he could finish, a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a sign to rise was made by a man who had been sitting at the other side of the table. "*Allons, mon ami!*" he said, "*C'est assez; allons!*"

"Who is this man?" inquired Herman, seeing Willy rise to follow him with a cloudy countenance.

"He is my keeper," he replied. "They are afraid I should escape."

He was about to quit the room with slow and reluctant steps, when Pedrillo sprang forward, exclaiming, "I must have this wild air, *avec son, whoo-hoo-hoo,* for my lady of Navarre, who dearly loves any thing *bizarre* and *outré.* She will translate the words."

Having intercepted Willy in his retreat, and ascertained where he was to be found,

he re-seated himself, still hoping the man he sought would make his appearance.

The altercation, which had been suspended by the music and singing, seemed now about to break out again. "You talk as if you had belonged to the Constable, and had been with him when he fell," said Captain Miraflores.

"I did belong to him, and was with him," replied the dark man.

"Thou!" exclaimed another whom they called Bel' Occhi, whose handsome dress and aristocratic air distinguished him among the faded uniforms and coarse manners of those by whom he was surrounded. "Thou!" he repeated with an air of contempt, "with the great Bourbon when he entered the breach! *I* was there, and saw the fatal flash of the arquebuss: I saw him fall."

"And *I* was there too!" said the man doggedly, with a sullen and scowling brow, evidently irritated by the contempt with

which his antagonist treated him. "'Twould have been better for him if I had been elsewhere!" he muttered to himself.

Low and indistinct as was the tone in which the last words were uttered, Bel' Occhi appeared to have caught them, for his face flushed violently, then faded to a bloodless hue, and he fixed a keenly scrutinizing look on the man, who however seemed unconscious of it, for his eyes were cast down as if in thought.

They had both been drinking freely, and had both shown signs of it, but Bel' Occhi now appeared to be suddenly sobered.

After a short pause, he said quietly, and with a jesting air, "Ah, thou wert there in thy dreams, my valiant friend! Thy legs would never have borne thee awake to the storming of that breach! I tell thee again it was a *coup d'arquebuse* that killed the Constable!"

"And I say no!" he replied fiercely,

goaded by Bel' Occhi's sneering tone. "The hand that fired was a coward's hand. It trembled and missed its aim. But there was another hand at the side of Bourbon that did not tremble, but sent the knife home to its haft—may be to avenge a wrong done in former days—may be because the Emperor bid high for the blow."

"Ha, villain!" said Herman, who had hitherto sat silently listening to the contest, "dost thou dare to insinuate that the Emperor——"

"I do say," he replied, violently interrupting him, irritated almost to frenzy, "that the Emperor's money paid for the blow! That it was the Emperor's General, Lannoi, it came from, and a heavy sum it was!"

"Now do I believe thee, wretch! At last have I got the truth fully from thee!" said Bel' Occhi, rising from his seat with a calm but pale face, "*Thou* wert the assassin of the greatest man in France! driven to

rebellion by a shameless woman. Thou shalt die! but not by my honourable sword; thy vile blood would defile it; but by the knife—a death too good for thee, since thus the hero died! This knife, with which I carved the boar's head for my supper, shall send thee to kindred fiends!" he added in the same calm tone, but with a flashing eye, as he took up the knife from the table and struck at him.

A scene of wild uproar now ensued. Captain Miraflores and a number of others sprang to Bel' Occhi's side; while a few rushed impetuously forward in defence of his destined victim.

Pedrillo, who thought with our Falstaff that "the better part of valour is discretion," lost no time in making his way out of the room, followed by Herman, who had no inclination either to witness the execution, or to defend a wretch who had convicted himself as an assassin.

As they quitted the house, a disagreeable contrast presented itself to their senses. The light and cheerful blaze of the burning logs on the hearth of the warm chamber was exchanged for the cold and dark streets. A sharp and cutting wind drove a sleety shower into their faces, and half blinded them. Fortunately they had not far to go; for as they emerged from a narrow street, Pedrillo said, "I must make another visit to my office before I go to bed, and see if there are any letters arrived since the morning."

As he spoke several persons passed them, for it was not late in the evening, although the party at the *Sword without a Scabbard* had supped before the scuffle which drove them out began.

One of these persons, on hearing their voices, turned and accosted Pedrillo.

"Ha, Grillon! is it thee, my man?" he exclaimed. "What has come to pass at the

Cerf volant that thou art dancing attendance on this fine evening?"

They were now in a narrow court. As Pedrillo spoke they passed through an open doorway, ascended a few dilapidated steps which had once been stone, but were now patched with broken bricks. He applied a key to a door, and the three entered a long low chamber. With the torch which had guided them through the streets he lighted a lamp which stood on a table, showing a cold and comfortless apartment, furnished with a few seats, a screen, a table, and a bed.

"There is one inquiring for you at the *Cerf volant*," the man replied in answer to his question; "and I came to see if you were willing to be found, for I have orders to seek you."

"No," said Pedrillo decidedly, "I am not to be found. I have on my hands already

more than I can well manage. Who is this man?"

"A Church messenger, just arrived. A *special* messenger!" said Grillon, emphasizing the word "special."

"Ha! one of the *Specials*, and just arrived. That makes a difference. Art sure he *is* just arrived? That he has seen no one?"

"Yes, yes, he and his men and his horses are dead beat—all knocked up. I left him with his head on the table, waiting for his supper, but fast asleep."

"Humph! ha! Thou must bring him here."

"Bring him here," he exclaimed: "it can't be done! Fagged and worn out with fatigue, do you think he will consent to turn out again, such a night as this? No; you must come to him if you mean to see him."

"Humph! you left him asleep—where?"

"In the public room," replied Grillon.

"I thought so," said Pedrillo, "and yet

thou wouldst have me come to him. Hark'e, Monsieur Grillon; thou hast a good salary, hast thou not? and thou dost not lack wit."

"I don't complain of my salary, and you have no reason to complain of my services, I think," said Grillon in a sort of deprecating tone.

"No; I never complain. It is not my way. I dismiss those who lack the power or the will to follow my instructions. Thou hast but to return to the *Cerf volant* at the end of the street; yet I will give thee time. Half an hour I allow thee to place the 'Special' on that seat, and his supper on that table."

Grillon remained for a minute silent, half sulky; then screwing up his features into a most curious expression, half comic, half tragic, quitted the room. "He's a shrewd knave, but he needs the spur," said Pedrillo, as he opened a closet door, took out a fagot and some fire-wood, and set busily to work

in making a fire. The wood was dry and soon blazed up cheerfully, giving a light and lively appearance to the dismal chamber, and the old screen on which its flickering beams danced. He then went to the table on which lay some pieces of charcoal, three or four nails, and some bits of wood with notches and crosses cut on them.

"Ah! here are my letters!" he said, as he took up these articles and examined them.

"Letters! Do you call that rubbish letters?" inquired Herman, who had contentedly seated himself by the now warm hearth, waiting with some curiosity to see whether Grillon would succeed in his mission of getting the "Special" out of his nest.

"Yes, these are letters," he replied, "written by such of my correspondents as know not how to handle a pen."

The half hour had already elapsed, and

another quarter passed, and Pedrillo's brow was beginning to contract, when the door opened, and Grillon's sly and grinning face became visible, ushering in a stranger muffled up in a thick travelling cloak. He then closed the door and disappeared.

Pedrillo advanced to assist the traveller in removing the cloak, but he said, as if surprised to find a third person, "This good brother is ——"

"One of us!" replied Pedrillo, "otherwise he would not have been here, since I was told you had secret business to consult me on. He and I are both ready to help the Church in whose service I am told you are ——"

"Yes, yes," said he, with a leer on his comfortable and rubicund face, throwing off his cloak, apparently satisfied with this explanation. "Yes. We know you are devoted to the interests of the Church by the Lady *you* serve. But we know too, that

you are no baby ignorant of the world, and silly enough to prefer other people's prosperity to your own. So I am commissioned to tell you, if you consent to put a certain person into our hands, you may expect a handsome recompense for your trouble."

"Well, my friend," replied Pedrillo coolly, "I see you know me. So it is of no use to purse up my mouth and play the hypocrite. At once then,—if I like the price you shall have the man. Who is he?"

"Ah, they told me we should soon come to terms if I could get a sight of you," said the stranger. "Otherwise I would not have come out to-night, and without my supper too: but as you leave Paris early in the morning ——"

"Without your supper! Why I am in the same famished state," said Pedrillo, laughing in his sleeve at this projected journey, which Grillon had devised to get

the "Special" out of the chimney corner. "It is near ten o'clock, and the knaves have brought us nothing to eat." He had scarcely uttered the last words when the door opened, and two men appeared at it bearing wooden trenchers, spoons, cups, &c., with half-a-dozen bottles of wine, bread, and all the requisites to furnish a good supper; among which were three wooden bowls closely covered, containing most savoury-scented *fricots*.

While the men were placing these on the table, Pedrillo took up the traveller's cloak, carried it behind the screen, and examined it; threw it down, and returned to the table, where they seated themselves.

"Ha! a braised fowl and Burgundy sausages!" said the stranger, as he raised the covers of the bowls. "I protest the very thing I had ordered for my own supper. Wild boar collops, an excellent dish, and plenty of it—Eels *à la barbette*, ano-

ther dish of which I am fond," he added, as he peeped into the bowls, one after the other, his face shining with satisfaction. Pedrillo courteously expressed his pleasure that the dishes suited his taste, and helped him plentifully; serving the wine also with unsparing hand, and affecting to drink freely himself, but Herman noticed that he actually swallowed only a moderate quantity.

The wine was excellent, and the effects of the good cheer and the good wine were soon visible in the twinkling eyes and augmented loquacity of the tired and hungry guest.

"Now," said he, "I will tell you this business we wish you to undertake. The person we want you to put into our hands, is a young German I followed from England some few weeks since,—Count Herman, of Felsenberg."

"Ha! It is him you seek, is it?" said Pedrillo, nearly thrown off his guard by surprise. "What, the Church wants him?

and you are to take him to England, eh? You serve the English Church then?"

"Why, as to that," he replied evasively, "'tis the same Church in England as elsewhere, you know. For myself, I am a good servant, and do my duty every where—to myself and my own interest. I had orders to follow him, and bring back, not him, but some letters he had got. But he kept them so close, that it was not till we had crossed the sea, that I was able to get hold of them. But I am now come from the Netherlands."

Herman, who sat listening in silent surprise, now again examined the man, but had no recollection of having ever seen him before. It was not so with the stranger, for as Herman replied to some question from Pedrillo, he suddenly turned to examine him, as if struck by his voice; became silent, and rising from his seat, declared, he must go back to the *Cerf volant.*

"My men are waiting for me in the street," he said, "and the night is cold. You will think of what I have told you."

But his legs, unfortunately for him, were not so steady as they should have been to bear him quickly out of the room. He staggered, and stood leaning against the chimney. Pedrillo had not failed to notice all that passed, and far too politic to add to a suspicion which he saw had been awakened in the mind of his guest, by any attempt to oppose his departure, fetched his cloak. Returning with that in one hand, and a bottle in the other, which he took from a shelf in the closet, from the bottom of which he had drawn the wood, he said, —

"We'll have a cup of spiced hypocras before you turn into the cold."

Filling the cups as he spoke, he presented one to him, but he refused it, and made another attempt to reach the door, with

little better success. Pedrillo placed the cloak on his shoulders, and officiously assisted him to fasten it; but by some counteraction to his will, some invisible impulse, which, instead of guiding him to the door, seated him again by the table with the spiced hippocras under his nose. The result was as might have been foreseen. The cup was emptied, and served to lull all his suspicion, his prudence, and his caution, with himself, to sleep.

This "consummation so devoutly wished" by Pedrillo, was no sooner attained, than he unceremoniously set to work to rummage his pockets and examine his garments, from the innermost of which he drew forth a small packet enclosed in a brown cloth bag. It was carefully tied, but bore neither seal nor address.

Its contents were a number of written papers. "There, sir!" said Pedrillo, offering them to Herman, "I believe you will

find something touching your own affairs among them."

To his great astonishment he refused to take them, coolly declining to avail himself of information so obtained. This was too much for the philosophy of Pedrillo, who had manœuvred with so much skill to get hold of them; and all his respect for his companion could not prevent his bursting out again with one of his favourite exclamations, and some epithets applied in his own peculiar style, of which Herman caught only some disjointed sentences from his muttering ejaculations, such as, "All the devils, — Count Herman, and a sucking dove."

CHAPTER VII.

Pedrillo had taken a good deal of wine, though not above half what he had affected to swallow. Herman also had drunk more than was necessary; and as the former dashed down the papers on to the table, with such violence as sent them flying about the room, exclaiming, "By the blessed army of martyrs, I should have done better to have sold him to the Church!" he replied, rashly and ungratefully, pointing to the snoring stranger, "It is not too late yet to make your bargain."

This ungracious speech made him furious, and he roundly swore he would do it;

but the next minute his rage changed to a sad and grieved expression. He sat down and covered his face with his hands, and said in a low voice, as if talking to himself, "I know I am a rogue, but not to him! I have been faithful to *his* cause. I did not deserve such words."

Herman heard this soliloquy. Struck with its truth, and his own injustice, he threw down the cloak in which he was about to wrap himself and depart, and laying his hand on his shoulder, he said, "Forgive me, Pedrillo: I am sorry for having spoken as I did. I know you have been a steady friend to me. Get up, my good fellow, and let us collect these papers. You see," he added, as he raised some of them from the floor, "we could not, if we would, read them, since they are written in cypher to which we have no key."

This was partly true, and served to satisfy his companion; for some, but not all, were

so written. Pedrillo's face cleared up, his good humour returned; and as soon as the brown bag was once again safely deposited in the sleeper's innermost pocket, he went out to summon the tired and shivering servants to carry their master back to the *Cerf volant;* while he and Herman also departed for the temporary abode where Fritz was waiting for him, having left Barneck to answer questions, by saying, his master had quitted Paris for a short time. It was midnight ere they reached it; and Herman retired to his chamber as soon as Pedrillo left him, glad to be once again quiet and alone.

Fritz, not pleased with this change of residence, had just finished his lamentations over the loss of his friend, the German wine-drawer, who had been so useful to him at their late abode, and was about to retire with the lamp from his master's room, when a piece of paper on the floor caught his eye.

He picked it up, and gave it to him, holding the lamp to enable him to read it. He did so, and was greatly astonished by the intelligence it conveyed, vague and indistinct as it was. It was written in French; and he distinctly recognised the handwriting of a distant relation of his own, and who, like himself, was in the service of the Emperor. It appeared to have been a postscript, or piece attached to a letter; for the silken threads which had once united them still hung on it. These were the words it contained:—

"The estates here cannot be held by a family a principal member of which has been convicted of felony. They will, therefore, also be confiscated. I have put things in such a train that I have no doubt of obtaining a grant of them, and will, in that case, take on myself to remunerate Glockendorf. That your Eminence will persevere in your efforts to

obtain a conviction is all that we ask for our past and future services, and the important intelligence we have furnished."

This scrap of paper would have been unintelligible to almost any other person than Herman, but to him it opened a wide scene of treachery and deceit, not only to himself, but to the imperial master whom they all served: for both the writer whose hand he recognised, and the person alluded to as Glockendorf, (which was not his name, but merely his birth-place,) were high in his favour and confidence, and had therefore ample opportunity of furnishing intelligence to "his Eminence." The payment for this treason was to be made at the expense of the family of Felsenberg. It was not possible to doubt that theirs were the estates spoken of, though not named.

Greatly disturbed by reading the paper which had reached him in a manner so

unsought and so singular, (since it must have been, he thought, part of the contents of the brown bag, accidentally enclosed in the folds of his cloak, when he threw it down to assist in collecting them,) he lay ruminating most unpleasantly on this double treason, almost regretting he had not followed the advice of Pedrillo, and examined the whole. The question now was, what steps ought he to take in consequence of this discovery.

Not only his own, but the interests of the master he served were in jeopardy. It was necessary, for both their sakes, to make him acquainted with the facts thus disclosed. But how was this to be done? It was no light matter to bring an accusation of high treason against these two persons, even if furnished with ample proof and on the spot to arrange the evidence; how then could he venture on opening the

subject at a distance, by letter, and provided with nothing but this vague, and apparently unimportant paper?

Unable to decide on what to do, and thoroughly weary, he at length fell asleep. But fate was hurrying on events that left him little time to revert again to the subject: for scarcely had he slept two hours, when he was again roused by a loud knocking at the door. He arose, and looked from the window, which, however, only allowed him to see the glare of lighted torches, and to hear the sound of men's voices, in the street below.

It was the untiring Pedrillo, guarded by a sufficient number of men to ensure his safety in traversing the streets at this late hour, it being now between three and four o'clock. He had returned, in obedience to instructions he had found waiting for him, to inform Herman that the preparations for the trial had been hurried on, and it was to

take place at the *Tournelles* on the morrow —that is, on the day that would dawn in a few hours; consequently no time was to be lost.

Moreover, he informed him that the accusation against himself and the other members of the family had been abandoned; why or wherefore he knew not; but Lady Felsenberg was alone to be tried. Surprised and agitated, to sleep again was out of the question with Herman, who arose, dressed himself, and, after a short consultation with Pedrillo, they set off together to the Sieur de Moleville, who was to conduct the defence of the accused.

All was still as they passed along, the red torch-light throwing a gloomy glare on the mean and miserable huts of the poorer burghers, and on the dead and lofty walls which surrounded the dwellings of the higher class. The scavenger wolves were again at their work, but they fled at the sound of

footsteps and voices. Pedrillo and his men having safely deposited Herman, went off to execute other orders; and he ascended the steps of the building rejoicing in the idea that Barneck would remain in ignorance of what was about to take place. This was a small consolation in the midst of misery. "Thank Heaven!" he said, "the faithful old man will be spared the terrible suspense and anxiety he would endure if he were better informed."

The conference with Monsieur de Moleville was long; the day dawned before it terminated. He then hastened back to his new domicile to warn Fritz not to speak on the subject to Barneck, and from thence to the Tournelles, where the trial was to take place. The Court was already crowded.

Although little more than a month had passed since the arrival of the prisoner in France, the affair had been much though quietly discussed.

It was known among the frequenters of the Court that the Queen of Navarre took a warm interest in it, and it was secretly whispered that the Minister was opposed to her; consequently the hall of justice was filled with a crowd of well dressed and distinguished looking persons, mingled with the ordinary attendants on the tribunals.

The Judges entered and took their seats. The officers of the Court placed themselves, and the *Huissiers* brought in the prisoner. Once again Herman beheld his mother. She was alone; neither Gertrude nor Blanche were with her. Once again with grief and anxiety he fixed his eyes upon her face. She was grave and pale, but calm and self-possessed.

The Sieur de Moleville stood as near her as the regulations of the Court admitted, and towards him also Herman now tried to force a passage through the obstructing crowd, but did not succeed.

An officer now read the warrant, which authorized the Court, then and there constituted, to proceed to the trial of the noble dame, Frances Gertrude, Comtesse Felsenberg, for causing and compassing the death of Jean Adrien St. Ange, known as the Chevalier De Sablons, one of the lieges of His Most Christian Majesty, François premier, King of France, and "*par voie ordinaire et extraordinaire*," (that is, by the power of the law, and the aid of the rack,) to obtain a confession of the crime, from the aforesaid noble dame.

The public prosecutor now arose, and in a summary manner narrated the case, calling on the prisoner to save herself from a prolonged and more severe investigation, by an avowal of her guilt.

To this the Sieur de Moleville replied in the name of the accused, by denying the competence of the Court to try her, the native of a foreign land, the free born subject of the

German Empire, for a crime said to have been committed in England, where her person had been unlawfully seized, and brought, by force, and against her will, to France.

The Court declared itself fully competent to take cognizance of the cause, inasmuch as the deceased was a subject of the French King, and the prisoner, as his wife, became also a subject of France: the condition of the woman following that of the husband.

"We deny these premises," said the Advocate boldly. "We do not admit the fact of the marriage; you cannot proceed until that be established by authentic documents, or credible witnesses."

Silence ensued, succeeded by the low tone of the voices of the Judges, who appeared to be somewhat embarrassed. A joyful murmur ran through the ranks of the lady's friends, whose faces brightened as they whispered to each other. The blank countenances and discontented silence of

their opponents, alike announced that the marriage could not be proved.

During this pause in the proceedings, Pedrillo entered the Court, and after a somewhat difficult struggle, succeeded in reaching Herman. He was commissioned by the Lady of Navarre to tell him that the return of the King to Paris was hourly expected, and that this was probably the reason why the business had been hurried forward, and the trial brought on so suddenly.

At length the long faces of the prosecutors cleared again, telling that an expedient had been found to overcome the impediment opposed to their progress. A *Huissier* called aloud, "Henri Baron de Montmorency, you are summoned to appear."

A tall and noble looking man arose, but an air of embarrassment and vexation marked his face: he seemed to hesitate, and, after a pause of apparent indecision,

he re-seated himself behind a number of persons, who crowded before him as if to hide his movements. It appeared he had been endeavouring to make his way out, when he was intercepted by the wardens, and brought back.

Once again was heard the summons to Henri Baron de Montmorency to appear. Slowly, reluctantly, and with an air of chagrin, he replied to the questions of the Court. The first was, "Were you acquainted with le Sieur de Hautecombe, a gentleman of Picardy?"

To this he replied, "I was."

"Were you present at his marriage in 1505?"

This he also answered in the affirmative.

"Look at the prisoner. Is she the lady to whom he was united?"

Herman trembled when he heard his father's name mentioned, and now eagerly watched the face of the Baron, as he turned,

in obedience to the command of the Court, towards the lady, whose pale face was now flushed with painful excitement, as her eyes met those of this most unwilling witness. His glance rested on her but an instant, when he said somewhat equivocally, "I cannot recognise in this lady the slim and lovely girl who was the bride of le Sieur de Hautecombe."

"You know that bride was Frances Gertrude, Countess of Felsenberg?"

"I do," at length came slowly and unwillingly from his lips.

This was enough. The first marriage constituted her a Frenchwoman, and rendered her amenable to the laws of France.

All obstacles to the trial thus removed, the witnesses were called. The first was Durochet. He related succinctly, but clearly, all the circumstances attending the career of the deceased, whose inseparable companion he had been, from their first

introduction, by the Baroness Mühlhausen, to the prisoner, at the Castle of Felsenberg, until his death. He represented De Sablons as devotedly attached to the woman whom he had won by the extraordinary accomplishments, natural and acquired, which distinguished him.

"Eminently handsome in face and person," said Durochet, "manly, brave, and graceful, he might have won any woman's love. He had the misfortune to win that of the prisoner. It was a fatal conquest. With the same facility with which she had bestowed her hand, almost unsought, on my lost friend and relative, did she, by a caprice the most unaccountable, suffer indifference first, and then hatred, to supersede the affection she for a short time entertained for her husband. Instigated by this feeling, and anxious to recover her freedom, she availed herself of her power over her servants, who were the only witnesses of the

marriage, to deny it. My lamented friend learned her determination with grief and astonishment. But it was her will, and finding her inflexible, he gave way and ceased to oppose her, until he learned that his wife had given birth to a child. Paternal love, and the sacred duties of a father, then roused him from the apathy which had succeeded the sorrows of his blighted affection, and he followed her to England, where she had concealed herself under the name of St. Amand, determined to rescue his child from the power of a woman so unprincipled.

"He succeeded in removing the little girl, and placed her, with the servant who attended her, in the cottage of fishermen on the coast of Devonshire. Unhappily, this woman, his wife, whom he still loved, alas! too well, prevailed on him to let her take leave of the child ere he removed it from the country. I saw him, on the evening of the third of September, leading the

child towards the gate of Fenton Manor. On the morning of the fourth, I found his lifeless body on the beach, beneath the cliff on which that house stands, inhabited by the prisoner and her family."

This narrative, in which truth and falsehood were so judiciously blended, delivered in the subdued tone of deep feeling, and profound grief, unvarnished by rhetoric or an attempt at eloquence, made a great impression on the audience; producing, as it was well calculated to do, a strong prejudice against the accused, not only in the minds of her enemies, but her friends also.

The next witness was examined by means of an interpreter. It was Hannah the nursemaid, the attendant of little Betta. Her testimony was unimportant, except as it tended to corroborate and confirm that of Durochet. She stated, that she had been induced to leave the service of Madame St. Amand by her unwillingness to quit the

child, which she was assured she must, unless she followed the instructions of the father, who alone had a right to its guardianship. That she had been ordered to wait the return of her new master, on the fourth of September, with her young charge whom he had taken out to walk. She had obeyed his orders, and sat up half the night, but had never seen either of them again.

The third witness also gave his evidence through the medium of an interpreter. This was no other, as Herman saw with surprise, than Wandering Willy, the songster, pedler, musician, and smuggler. He had found the body of the deceased lying on the beach beneath the black-rock bluff, early in the morning; and almost at the moment he discovered it, the first witness, Durochet, came up. They both examined it, but could find no wound, nor was there any blood on it. He had assisted to bear it to the Infirmary of Fenmoor Abbey.

This was all that Willy the songster could, or would tell of the transaction. His evidence was given in a half sullen, reluctant, and hesitating manner, that showed he was an unwilling witness, and led the Court to believe he knew more than he chose to tell. It was consequently debated whether they should proceed to the *voie extraordinaire*,—that is, refresh his memory with the thumb-screws, or some stimulant equally agreeable. But these examinations, with the unlooked for delay and impediments which had arisen, had consumed the day, and the Court adjourned till the morrow.

Herman had hoped to have found an opportunity of speaking to his mother on her passage, but she was so strictly guarded and hemmed in by the exempts and archers, that no one could approach her. From the extraordinary vigilance of her escort, it appeared as if they were apprehensive of a rescue.

Slowly and sorrowfully, his spirit depressed by grief and anxiety, he returned to his lodging, accompanied by Pedrillo, who tried to cheer him.

"Hitherto," he said, "there has been nothing whatever produced to criminate the Lady Felsenberg. No proof that the deceased had been at Fenton Manor. But what puzzles me most, and what, I confess, I cannot comprehend, is, how an offer, such as was made on your part, to relinquish your claim to these estates, should not have stopped the trial at once. I feel sure such a price for a suspension of hostilities would never have been rejected. There is some countermining agency at work, some wheel within a wheel, of whose movements we are not aware, among these intriguing courtiers; or the agent who undertook the negociation has grossly blundered, and defeated the plan by his *gaucherie*. I will go and see if I can fish out any thing on the subject, and

try also whether I can get any news of the King's return."

The paper Herman had found had thrown some light on this affair, and he believed this wheel within a wheel was there explained; but for many reasons he would not communicate his knowledge to his companion, who now departed, leaving him to his own melancholy ruminations. In these, however, he did not long indulge, but took his way again to the residence of the Sieur de Moleville, with whom he had a short, but somewhat cheering conference. A man of vigorous intellect, and great energy of character, he never despaired.

He knew, indeed, in the present instance, the Judges were all biassed against his client, by the influence the Minister held over them; and that they would employ every means, fair and unfair, to obtain a conviction. But yet, on the other hand, they would not dare openly to violate the

forms of justice. For the King was just when his necessities, or rather the necessities of his mistresses and favourites, allowed him to be so; and he would scarcely sanction a flagrant breach of the laws. "Trust me, sir," he said to his drooping auditor, "we have many resources, but we must not lose our courage, or give way to despair. That would be the surest way to throw the game into our enemy's hands."

Somewhat comforted, Herman once again returned to his temporary home, where he sat, long hoping Pedrillo might come. But he came no more: and at a late hour of the night, he stretched himself on his bed, not to sleep, but to think, to anticipate the events of the anxiously expected — the dreaded morrow, which soon dawned, and once again he took his way to the court of justice. At the entrance he saw Pedrillo for a moment. He told him the King was not returned; "Nor will he come," he

said, "until this trial is over. From what I have gathered, I have little doubt that he will not be allowed to return till that is finished. Domine Duprat knows well what he is about. He is not easily foiled when he has arranged his plan of proceeding."

The Court was soon again crowded with persons of all ranks; the less privileged class slowly forcing a passage, and struggling for room; while the way was cleared by the attendants for those of higher rank.

Once more the prisoner was brought in, and placed in the same conspicuous situation as before. The trial recommenced by the re-examination of Wandering Willy from whom, however, no more information was obtained, except the fact of his having aided the lay brothers of the monastery to place the body on a table in the hospital, at the command of Father Giuseppe, who had been summoned in his medical capacity.

Father Giuseppe was next examined.

He stated that the evidence of Wandering Willy was correct. He had been summoned to succour a wounded stranger, but who he at once saw was dead, and had been so probably many hours. That on proceeding to examine the body in order to ascertain the cause of his death, he found no wound or injury, but a contusion on the head, and ultimately, on further search, a fracture of the skull.

"Were there no traces of poison on the stomach, or signs of it on the body?"

"None," replied the witness to this question of the Court. "Death was the result of the fractured skull, which might have been done by a fall from the cliff, or a blow from some blunt instrument. My own belief is, that he was destroyed before he was flung over the cliff."

A low murmur ran through the Court at this declaration, but subsided into a silence the most profound as he proceeded:

"The clothes of the deceased were in such disarray, torn and displaced, as to show there had been a struggle. There were rushes, and a sprig of rosemary in his shoes, and this was within his vest."

The article produced was a lady's stocking, made of fine brown cloth, embroidered with gold thread, and laced with a ribbon with golden tags. From the quality of the cloth, it was decided to be the produce of an Eastern loom, Europe at that time fabricating none but coarse woollen goods.

The second witness, Hannah Binks, was now recalled, and again questioned through an interpreter, (Father Giuseppe needed none.) She readily, and at once, recognised the stocking as belonging to Lady Felsenberg. She had seen that, and others similar to it, often in the hands of Esther, she said, for the ribbons often broke, and were replaced with fresh ones. Once a pair was lost, and a terrible fuss was made about it;

for Esther declared that no tailor, either in England or France, knew how to make a lady's stocking, and Madame St. Amand would not wear one that had the shadow of a wrinkle. She could throw no farther light on the subject, and was again dismissed; and there was a pause in the proceedings.

This continued some time; something seemed to go wrong with the prosecuting party. An embarrassment evidently existed, from the frequent little consultations among them, carried on in a voice so low as to be inaudible beyond the immediate vicinity of the speakers. A whisper ran through the Court that an important witness had disappeared, and could not be found. Nearly an hour of this suspense and anxiety to both parties passed.

At length the gloom on the faces of the discomfited prosecutors began to clear up. A little bustle took place, and the long

waited for appeared. He was a man of middle age and ordinary appearance, except that his countenance bore an expression of what might be called ferocious cunning, and a singular twinkling of his small black eyes. He was dressed as one belonging to the middle class of Frenchmen, one of whom he declared himself; by name Jean Marie Boutonnier, by trade a merchant, trading with foreign countries, but not in the most direct or open manner, as appeared on examination. He was, in fact, a smuggler, and comrade of Songster Willy.

He said that, on the evening of the fourth of September, he was on the high down on which Fenton Manor stands, a little after sunset, on business: that, believing he should have to wait a long while for the person he expected to meet him, and being tired with a long journey, he laid himself down among the heath and fern, near the wall of the orchard belonging to the Manor-

house : that he did not fall asleep, for his head was full of his affairs, but lay still and undisturbed for a short time, when his attention was roused by the approach of a man in the dress of a monk, who, after looking round, drew from his vest a key, with which he opened a door in the wall of the orchard, through which he passed, and closed after him hastily. When questioned how he knew the door opened into the orchard, he replied that he had been in the habit of supplying the inhabitants with merchandise, and was well acquainted with the premises. He went on to state, that he saw no other person, or heard any unusual sound, till half an hour after the curfew tolled from the Abbey, when his attention was again roused by hearing a key grating in the lock of the door, followed by a sweeping sound, as if something was trailing on the ground. His curiosity being excited, he half rose, and moved nearer; but, in

doing so, the slight noise he made seemed to alarm these persons, whoever they were; for they instantly retreated within the orchard, leaving the burden they were drawing without. On approaching, he discovered it to be the body of a man, and, on farther inspection, knew it to be the same person he had seen enter an hour or two before. Finding that he was dead, he was induced to search his pockets for papers, or something that might serve to throw light on an affair so mysterious. In the pocket of a leathern vest he found a document, which he now produced. Scarcely had he secured it when the door again opened, and two persons came so hastily forth that he had scarcely time to throw himself down among the fern; which he did partly from fear, being alone, and partly from a wish to see what these people were about. But, almost immediately after he had done so, the signal

he had been waiting for sounded, and he was obliged to go.

He was now questioned with regard to the persons he said had been occupied in trailing the body of the deceased on the ground: were they men or women? He declared he could not say positively, but he thought one of them was a woman—a lady, for he heard the rustling of silk.

It was suggested it might have been the serge of the monk's frock which occasioned this sound.

"No, no," he replied; "the night was still. It was the *whispering* sound of a silken garment."

How painfully did these words recall to Herman's recollection the events of that terrible evening, when he too, in the solemn stillness of the air, had heard the "whispering of the silken garment." The paper was now read aloud which had been found on the person of the deceased. It was an

acknowledgment of the marriage of Lady Felsenberg, signed by herself and her two servants, Johann Barneck and Esther Griffindale.

CHAPTER VIII.

A BUZZ and a murmur ran through the Court. A chain of evidence had now been produced, which left no doubt of the guilt of the accused. A heavy despondence saddened the faces of the lady's friends, and a groan burst from the sinking heart of her son. It was audibly echoed from a short distance. He turned his eyes towards the place, and beheld Barneck, who had not only been in Court all day, but had also provided himself with an interpreter, who explained to him all that he would otherwise have lost, from his imperfect knowledge of the language. Herman no sooner

saw him than he made an attempt to join him; but the press of the people rendered this, at the moment, a hopeless effort.

It appeared as if the prosecutors had not been aware of the existence of this document, or at any rate, they were ignorant of its contents, since neither Barneck nor Esther had been summoned. Indeed, the whole of the arrangements seemed to have been made in a manner so hurried and confused, as to embarrass and impede them at every stage of the trial. Officers were now sent to seek these new witnesses; proceedings were suspended until they should appear; and Herman now made another, and this time successful, effort to reach the old man. To his great surprise, he found him now still and calm, showing no signs of emotion, or the deep grief he expected to see on his face. He seemed to be buried in thought; for Herman stood beside him, laid his hand on his arm, and spoke to him,

without rousing his attention. He looked up at the sound of his voice, but his eye gave no sign of recognition. Slowly rising from his seat, he said aloud, "I am Johann Barneck. I am an old man; I have not long to remain upon the earth; it is meet I should confess my sins before I die. It is useless to seek other witnesses: I will tell you all. I killed this man; I am guilty."

Herman looked at him with astonishment. This truth-loving, upright old man, with a calm face uttering deliberately the most decided falsehood. Too well he knew he was not guilty. Unable to decide whether his intellect was shaken by grief and anxiety, or that he had resolved on sacrificing himself to save his mistress; he, however, strove to soothe him and keep him quiet. "Sit down, my good Barneck," he said gently.

"No, sir," he replied. "I must not sit

down till I have finished what I have to do. I killed this man," he repeated loudly.

A murmur of surprise ran through the Court, and every eye was turned towards him.

"You, old man?" said the prosecutor, "you killed him, at the instigation of the prisoner? you poisoned him?

"No!" he replied firmly, "not at the instigation of the prisoner, nor by poison. I killed him with a blow: I hated him; I wished him dead, and I killed him!"

Herman, now convinced that his reason had given way, tried again to keep him quiet, but he did not succeed. The Court appeared but little inclined to listen to him, but he persisted in declaring that he alone was guilty.

At length he was placed at the bar and questioned, "With what instrument were you armed?"

"None! I had no weapon. I struck him with my hand."

"You, old man?" again said the prosecutor, "weak and infirm! The deceased is described as a strong man in the prime of life. How then could you have destroyed him, unless by poison?"

"There is always means to do a thing you wish to do. I have said I hated him, and wished him dead, but I did not poison him. Did not the reverend physician, Father Giuseppe, declare, he did not die by poison? If only a young and strong man could have killed him, how could the Gräfin—a lady—a delicate lady, have done it? As I hope for mercy—not here, but hereafter, my lady never, in any way, instigated me to do the deed! neither by look nor word."

Again a murmur of astonishment ran through the Court, as Barneck, in his strange *patois* of mingled French and German, which yet, by dint of the energetic earnestness with which he spoke, he con-

trived to render intelligible; while he continued thus to plead for the accused, and against himself, he was listened to with the deepest attention, and a warm interest in the fate of this singular old man was created in every good heart that heard him.

By order of the Court he was now examined, occasionally by an interpreter. He said, in answer to the questions, "On the morning of the fourth of September, my lady had ordered me to sign the paper which acknowledged her marriage with that bad man. I knew what power it would give him over her. I expected he would try to carry her away by force, as he did once before. I knew he was to come for the paper, and I was sure he would not wait long, so I kept on the watch, and towards evening I hid myself behind the arras."

"You had formed, then, a deliberate plan of assassination?"

"No, I had formed no plan. But I knew he was a villain, and that my lady would have had no help near, if he should ill treat her, because the buttery and the kitchen were at the other end of the house, and there were no waiting rooms, as we had at Schloss Felsenberg. The Chevalier De Sablons came; he and my lady quarrelled; he was rude and insolent, and threatened her, if she did not consent to go away with him. When I saw him put his hands on her, I came softly behind him, and struck him a heavy blow. He fell: in short, he was killed."

"And your Lady looked on, and saw you murder her husband?"

"My Lady? no. She had fainted, and lay on the rushes," he said after a short pause.

"When you had killed him, what did you do with the body?"

"I carried it out, and flung it over the cliff."

"Alone, and without help?"

"No. I drew it out of the room, and pushed it down the cellar stairs, and locked it in a cellar, till I could get help, to take it out of the house."

"Who aided you in removing it?"

"A fisherman from the hamlet on the beach."

"His name?"

Barneck was silent. At length he said, "I will not tell his name."

"Old man, we shall make you tell it," said the examiner, sternly.

"I will not tell," he repeated, "I have no more to say."

Herman now turned his eyes, from the face of Barneck, to that of his mother, to see what effect this tale would produce on her. Her head was bent down, and she appeared to be weeping. At this moment, a little bustle took place near one of the entrances, and Esther Griffindale was

brought in. The face of Barneck visibly changed at sight of her, and he said in a loud voice, " Esther Griffindale knows nothing of this. I never told her, or any one else, that I killed the Chevalier De Sablons."

Esther looked pale, and trembled as she entered; but on hearing these words, her head was bent down, so that no one could see what effect they produced on her.

They were about to interrogate her, when the Countess arose from her seat, wiping the tears from her eyes, her face alternately flushing, and fading to a death-like paleness. After a pause, during which she seemed to have subdued her emotion, she addressed the Court. Every eye was fixed upon her, with the keenest, the most intense interest, as she now stood, dignified and graceful, the very prototype of a *lady*. Her face was now again pale, but her dark eye sparkled with excitement.

A tremor of hope and fear seemed to take possession of her friends, and almost to subdue her enemies, as the voice of this handsome, and still young looking woman, arraigned for murder—the murder of her husband—broke on the awful stillness of the Court, and she said, in tones sweet and clear, but tremulous with emotion, "Oh my Judges, and Gentlemen of the Court, let Barneck be removed from the bar! The faithful, the devoted old man, is no criminal; he has but accused himself in the vain hope of saving me, who alone am guilty. I acknowledge that the Chevalier De Sablons was my husband, and that I destroyed him."

She paused, struggling for composure, while a shiver of horror seemed to pervade the whole mass of auditors, as she made this dreadful confession. She then continued, "I will not strive to palliate the crime, by dwelling on the vices of my victim. But I owe it to myself, to my family, and

the friends unhappily but too much interested in my fate, to explain the circumstances that led to this fatal, but unpremeditated deed.

"I need not relate how the intelligence reached me: I will only say, that not more than three months after this ill-fated union, I received proofs the most convincing, that the person to whom I had bound myself, in the full faith of his being a man of honour and a gentleman, was base born, vicious, and unprincipled. From what he had already done to others, I was too well prepared for what he would endeavour to do to me and mine. I knew he would ruin and disgrace us. I knew too certainly that the man I had made my husband was, and would be, my worst enemy, and that I must guard against him as such. I was unhappy, but I thought not of denying his claims, till the death of the priest who married us. No sooner did this event reach my ears, than I resolved

to deny the marriage. Rashly and imprudently did I form these fetters, rashly and imprudently I determined to break them.

"Blinded by false reasoning, I believed it right and just to use the same weapons as those which had been employed against me. I boldly outraged truth, and declared publicly that he was not my husband. Baffled and defeated in his plans, he vowed revenge. The God of justice aided him, and punished me: I gave birth to his child—secretly and unknown even to my other children; and to avoid his schemes of vengeance, I quitted my home and took refuge in England. He found me out, came into the neighbourhood in disguise, seduced my servants, and stole my child. In the first burst of my grief, he came to me secretly, acknowledged that the child was in his power, forced from me a confession that she was my daughter—and his; and offered to restore her to me, on condition of my sign-

ing the declaration which has been read. I consented, but not till he had bound himself by oaths the most tremendous, not to take her from me again. He left the paper and returned the next evening, the fourth of September, bearing under his cloak, asleep, my—my little Betta. I took her from him, and did not notice that he locked the door by which he entered.

"I laid the child down, and when he had again repeated the oaths, by which he bound himself to leave us unmolested, I gave him the paper, signed by myself and the two witnesses. As soon as he had secured it, he turned to me with a sneering and scornful laugh, and said, 'Now, Madam, we have got through the ceremony of swearing, you will find I shall keep my oaths, at least as well as you did those you took at the altar.' He then took up the child in his arms, and drawing a key from his pocket, unlocked a door at the other end of

the room." The lady paused, put her hand to her forehead, sighed heavily, and then went on.

"God only knows how agonizing is the pang that fills the heart — how fearful the frenzy that seizes the brain, of the mother about to lose her child! God only, who created them, knows how powerful are the ties by which they are united! He was quitting the room. I flew to the door by which he had entered to call for help to seize him and rescue the child. It was locked, the key gone. I took up a footstool from the floor and struck him with all my strength — on the head. He fell——"

Again she stopped, and put her hand to her forehead.

"I know not," she went on, once more breaking a silence so profound that a pin might have been heard to drop. "I have never known whether he died by that blow, or whether I repeated it. I have

tried to recollect what followed. I think there must have been a struggle, but it is all vague, dim, and indistinct. This is all I can tell, all I know of the terrible transaction."

A question was put by the Court, to which no answer was returned; the prisoner had fainted. Senseless and motionless, she was borne out by the officials.

The horror and indignation which her confession had at first excited, subsided as she proceeded in her narrative; and now, at its conclusion, sentiments of pity and regret alone seemed to reign among her auditors. Herman, who with his face hid by the hood of his dress, had listened to the terrible tale he had never before heard, no sooner saw his mother carried out than he made a desperate effort to follow her; but though he succeeded in forcing a passage through the dense throng, only arrived time enough to see the litter in which they placed her carried off.

Esther Griffindale was now examined. Her bold spirit seemed quite subdued. She was very pale, and trembled. When questioned, she hesitated and appeared undecided what to confess and what to deny. Fortunately for herself she was too much frightened to prevaricate, and not seeing how she could aid the Countess by falsehood, resolved to speak the truth.

She stated that, on the evening of the day in question, the young ladies being absent, and Count Herman also, she went to the usual sitting room to talk to her lady, and was surprised to find the door fastened. She listened, but could hear nothing; begged to be let in, but receiving no answer, she went round to the other door of the room hoping it might be unlocked. It was open, and just within the doorway was the Chevalier de Sablons.

"Alive?"

"No," said the witness, shuddering at

the recollection of the scene: "no, he was dead. Stretched on the rushes of the floor."

"And Lady Felsenberg, what was she doing?"

"She was sitting on the ground beside him, with the little girl, that people were scouring the country in search of, asleep in her lap. I spoke to her, and asked her how this had happened; but she would not answer me. I was frightened, and did not know what to do. I tried to draw away the corpse, but it was too heavy. I wished to go and seek for Barneck, but I did not dare to leave my lady in the strange way she was in. She would neither speak nor move, nor let me take the child, as I tried to do. At last she got up, and helped me to draw the body along the stone passage, and down the cellar stairs. I then got a key of the door in the orchard wall, and went back to the cellar. Through that

we carried it, and across a paved court, and till we got it outside the orchard, when we were frightened by a noise; but listening, and finding all still again, we went on dragging it as fast as we could to the edge of the black rock, where we flung it down."

This story, told with much reluctance and hesitation, nevertheless coincided sufficiently with the confession of the Countess, to leave no doubt of its truth. But it was not the whole truth; for she afterwards related many circumstances she now thought proper to omit: one of them was, that fully believing Lady Felsenberg had killed her husband—though how she could not tell—and terrified lest the secret should be discovered, she had been obliged to scold and shake her mistress, before she could rouse her to aid in removing the body.

There were no other witnesses. The evidence and the confession were sufficiently

conclusive. The prisoner was declared guilty. But as the sentence must be read in the presence of the criminal, all farther proceedings were for the present suspended, and the Court broke up.

Herman, weary, exhausted, and spiritless, slowly returned to his lodging, where he found Barneck, who had been released, equally wretched and desponding. Compelled to stifle his own miserable feelings, and strive to cheer the old man with hopes he did not himself entertain, although it was yet early in the evening, he prevailed on him to go to bed, and then prepared again to seek Monsieur de Moleville.

As he descended the stairs he met Pedrillo, who requested him to return, with a graver face and a more respectful manner than he had ever before exhibited. He readily complied, touched with this deference, so singularly contrasting with the rattling, chattering, slangy coarseness which

characterized the *ci-devant* muleteer, and announcing a kindness of heart he did not expect from the rude and reckless Pedrillo. When they were alone he drew from his pocket a paper, and from a bundle he held in his hand the dress of a Brother of Saint Benoit.

"Here," he said, "is an order to admit Father Grégoire St. Simon to the prison chamber of Madame de Felsenberg. The person of the holy Father is not known to the archers and exempts of the Châtelet, it being but a short time since he arrived from Rome. But it will be as well, notwithstanding, to conceal your face. Bestow on them, as you pass, a few *benedicites* and *pax vobiscums*, and they will never find out you have not been regularly ordained. If you would wait till to-morrow——"

"No, no; I will go now," said Herman, hastily interrupting him, and covering himself with the cloak. Suddenly he staggered,

and would have fallen, had not Pedrillo caught him by the arm, and held him up.

"You look pale and weary," he said "have you had any food lately?"

"Not to-day," he replied. "I cannot eat."

"Perhaps not," said the sympathizing messenger, seeing that the young man was quite exhausted: "but wait a minute."

He ran out of the room, returning almost immediately with a bottle of wine and some bread. He filled a cup, and, soaking the bread in it, put it to Herman's lips, and fed him like a child; patting and cajoling him with kind and hopeful words, to persuade him to swallow it.

Revived by this necessary nourishment, he now arose to go, but he was still feeble; and Pedrillo, after prevailing on him to take a little more wine, led him down the stairs, and through the streets, nor quitted him till he arrived at the gate of the prison. He presented the order, and was admitted.

Sick at heart, he stood waiting while the huge keys turned in the locks, and as the bolts were drawn through their sockets, they seemed to grate upon his brain. He was ill fit, either in body or mind, to encounter the gloomy influence of prison walls, in passing to such a scene as he anticipated.

He followed the sub-warden, but none of Pedrillo's instructions were remembered. No *pax vobiscum* saluted him, nor did he conceal his face; however, he arrived at a large chamber on the ground floor, for the abode of the prisoners had been changed. No one was in it, and he passed on to another, the door of which was half open. He looked in. It was a bed-chamber, with old and faded furniture, which had once been costly. Long years before, these rooms had been inhabited by a state prisoner of high rank, and still bore traces of the magnificence with which they had once been decorated.

On the bed lay Lady Felsenberg, in that still and motionless sleep which follows the exhaustion of the nervous energy by great excitement; a sleep so death-like and profound that it is only on a close view that signs of life are visible in the faint and half-drawn breath, and, coming at such a crisis, saves the sleeper from death or insanity. Beside her mother, sleeping too, lay Gertrude, but so sadly altered that hardly would he have known her elsewhere. Her round, plump, Hebe-like form wasted and thin, her eyes sunk in their sockets, and surrounded by a livid circle, denoting extreme debility. Her cheek was hollow and wan; and a hoarse low cough slightly disturbed her from time to time, and was followed by a moan, but without waking her. One thin, transparent hand clasped that of Lady Felsenberg, the other was round her mother's neck, and tears were still visible on her faded cheeks.

For a while Herman gazed fixedly on this scene, with heart-breaking sorrow. He believed he saw death written on the brow of Gertrude — the lovely, the gay, the blooming Gertrude; the playmate, the companion of his childhood, his affectionate and steady friend—like his mother, she too was doomed. There was yet another whom his sad heart sought, once — still dear; alas! too dear, as he felt in this hour of deep affliction, when the heart pines for sympathy and love.

He turned his heavy eye around the chamber. Blanche was standing at a distance from the bed. At the sound of an approaching footstep she raised her finger to her lip, as an injunction for silence. She was harassed, care-worn, and thin, but appeared to be in tolerable health. He looked at her for a moment, and then turned away and retreated. The sight of her now seemed to produce none but the

bitterest feelings in his mind. Already worn and weakened by what he had lately undergone, he was in no fit state to encounter such a scene as this, and the prospect of what was before him.

He seated himself at the end of the outer room ; a dark and sullen shade clouded his face. His spirit sunk, his courage and his faith in a just and protecting Providence were gone. The fiend Despair took possession of him ; he cursed his existence, and the Power that created him. "To suffer thus," he muttered. "I shall be a beggar; dishonoured, unallied, uncared for by any one. What had they, what had I done, to merit such a fate? Why should I bear it? why should I live?"

He believed himself unheard, alone: it was not so. Blanche had seen the sullen shadow on his brow, his gloomy eye, and trembled. Softly closing the door of the bed-room, she went to him, stood near, and

watched him. Absorbed in his own wretchedness, he heeded, he saw her not. She placed herself before him, and said gently, "Take courage, Herman; all is not yet lost!"

He looked up, fixed a stern glance on her, and said fiercely, "How do you dare to approach me at a time like this? Thus to creep on my privacy, and listen to my secret thoughts! *You*, of all others, should avoid the victim you have helped to make Go, woman, leave me."

"No, Herman," she said firmly; "I will not leave you thus, a prey to despair. Never! never!" she added passionately, kneeling at his feet. "You are my cousin, were once my betrothed, my destined and dear husband! Oh Herman, dear Herman, never have the youthful vows which bound us to each other been forgotten by me. Never have I ceased to love you; never did my heart wander from its loyalty. But,

circumstances fatally combining to throw suspicion on my conduct, you believed me false; you treated me with cold unkindness, neglected and shunned me. My woman's feelings, my woman's pride, were outraged; and I scorned to seek an explanation you desired not. But now, — now in this hour of adversity and sorrow, when I see you abandoned to a gloomy despair,—this is no time to cherish cold prudence, or a woman's pride. I will tell you that I love you, that your happiness is dearer to me than my own. You say you are a beggar. I have, as you know, a small property,—take that, take me! If the world slight, or frown on you, I will cherish and comfort you. You will fly from its hollow and deceitful scenes to the arms of your wife, and learn to prize the devotion of one fond and faithful heart beyond all it can bestow. You know not, you never knew, the strength of my affection. Even when I believed, as I was

taught to do, that you cared not for me; that you loved another, and if you kept your engagement with me, it would be from a sense of honour, not love; oh, even then my heart clung to you with all a woman's devoted and enduring love!"

Herman, roused and moved by this passionate pleading of the calm, quiet, and, for a long time past, the cold and shy Blanche, looked earnestly at her: and for a moment a gentle softness relaxed the rigid muscles of his face, but soon gave way, and he said sternly, "Away, away! This is a woman's stratagem, a woman's weakness — compassion — that has not energy of nerve enough to see an adverse fate abruptly terminated by a voluntary death. Leave me, I am calmer; I shall not now be rash. Leave me."

"Never! never!" again emphatically exclaimed Blanche, who saw that he only sought to get rid of her. "Oh, Herman,

will you destroy me? If you die, I shall not, I cannot live."

He fixed his eyes again on her face, but their expression was cold and sullen, and he remained obstinately silent. Desperately the poor girl rose from her knees, put her arms round his neck, laid her head upon his shoulder, and said, "Herman, I am your betrothed—your wife! I am weak and faint; put your arms round me, or I shall fall!"

He appeared to comply mechanically; but in a moment afterwards his hot tears were falling on her bosom, and the fold of his arms tightened around her waist.

What she felt at that moment those only can know who, like her, have seen one they love in the sullen torpor of despair—on the verge of insanity.

A long pause of silence ensued: not a word was spoken by either of them; but their tears — soothing, heart-relieving tears

— were mingled. At length he raised his head, and said in a gentle tone, "Is it true? do you really love me, Blanche?"

She replied only by a mute caress.

This precious sympathy could not, indeed, remove the source of their grief, but it gave to each a sustaining power which enabled them to bear up against it.

When they were somewhat more composed, he said, "How is it, Blanche, that you have suffered me to remain so long ignorant of your sentiments? Why has my heart been left to wither in desolate loneliness? You must have known it was still devoted to you?"

"Yes," she replied; "I thought you had still some affection for me, or I had not told my tale even now; for I should have had no hope of soothing your sorrow by my sympathy. But we were both the victims of that bad man's intrigues; suspicion and distrust was engendered; you never asked

an explanation. It is not in the character of woman to advance unsought, but rather to retreat and suffer in silence. But now you are my betrothed again, are you not? and I am your faithfully devoted friend."

"Yes, yes," he said, fondly embracing her, "you are my own dear Blanche! I will try to live for you, when nothing else is left me."

"You have much more left," she replied cheerfully. "Strive to bear up, dear Herman. Think how warm a friend we have in the noble Lady of Navarre. And as for Gertrude, I feel sure she will recover. She has had a great shock, but she has a young and healthy frame, and will get over it. Remember, dear, that there is a Power above that knows all, and guides all. Trust more to Providence, and less to your own judgment, which you see," she added, trying to smile, "has so long misled you, since you believed *my* warm and constant

heart was cold and faithless. And now you will go home and try to sleep, and come again to-morrow, when you will be better able to comfort your mother and Gertrude."

"To-morrow!" he said starting. "Oh no: I will not go till I have seen them, spoken to them. To-morrow!" he repeated with a shudder; "you know not—you have not heard — who knows but to-morrow may——"

He could not go on.

"Yes," she replied, striving to speak in a firm tone, terrified lest he should relapse into that partial wandering of the intellect from which she had had so much difficulty to rouse him. "I know your mother has confessed that De Sablons fell by a blow from her hand; but that the deed was done in a moment of desperation, of madness, is also known, and cannot be called, or punished as murder."

He shook his head, but yet he seemed to

listen willingly and pleased, to the arguments she brought forward to convince him that affairs were not so desperate as he believed. Poor Blanche, while she so strenuously strove to fortify the failing courage of another, was herself in need of support. Her own heart was sinking with dismay; and more than once, during this harassing interview, she had felt symptoms of physical weakness that made her fear she should faint. But well aware that she was, at this critical period, the sole prop and stay to her unhappy relatives, she struggled manfully to bear up against the tide of ill that threatened to overwhelm them all. Should Herman's strength of body or mind give way, it would be the climax of misfortune, and she watched him with an anxious eye.

Young as she was, and inexperienced, the strong affection she felt for them—above all for him, bestowed on her a sort of intuitive sense of what was needful. No physician

could have seen more clearly the necessity of suspending the operations, and giving at least a short repose, to his heated and morbidly excited brain. With a woman's tact she knew it would but increase his irritability to oppose him; she said then, quietly, "Yes, I think you are right; I will see if they are awake." She left him, roused the sleepers, and told them in a few words the state of the case. This was a judicious step. The interview was deeply distressing, but short.

Lady Felsenberg assured him, solemnly and truly, that, so far from being more unhappy at this crisis of her fate, she had not known so much peace of mind for many, many months, as she had done within the last few hours. "Dear Herman," she said, "I have no need of pity now. You would rejoice if you knew the peaceful feelings, the holy calm, that has succeeded the torture of suspense in which I lived, with

the burden of a secret crime on my conscience. I have done my duty in saving that faithful old Barneck, and have found repose even in this world, and trust I shall find it in another. I have made my peace with God. This, Herman, is alone important. All else — whatever may ensue — is light and trifling in comparison!"

This was consolation, — an assurance soothing to his harassed mind. Then the young Gertrude, too, feeble indeed, but striving to look cheerful, clung to him and caressed him, telling him how much better and stronger she was since her sleep. "And I am still so sleepy," she said, "that I don't think any thing else could have roused me but hearing you were here. When you are gone I shall sleep again."

This affectionate fraud prevailed on him to depart, and seek the repose he himself so greatly needed: not, however, till he had seen Monsieur de Moleville, who, grieved at

his worn and haggard appearance, kindly strove to cheer him with hopes he could scarcely be said himself to entertain. And thus was he cheated into seeking rest, without which he would probably have lost all power to aid himself, or those he loved better than himself. Thus soothed and tranquillized, a feeble ray of hope still glimmering in his heart, amid the stormy darkness of the sea, whose evil waves menaced a fatal shipwreck, he fell asleep, and dreamed he was teaching Gertrude and Blanche to skate on the old moat at Felsenberg Castle. He saw their youthful forms gliding before him — their merry laugh echoed in his ears. His mother, too, was there, looking at them; but it was through the thick bars of a prison window, and her face was sad and sorrowful, because she could not join them. They left their sport, and strove to set her free, but could not, and then they wept together.

CHAPTER IX.

While the scenes we have related were going on in the prison chambers, the Queen of Navarre sat alone in one of the rooms of the hotel St. Paul, which for some time past had been her residence, although her state assemblies were often held at the palace.

She had many jarring interests to reconcile, and many captious spirits to subdue in France, to which she looked for aid in restoring the throne of Navarre to its legitimate sovereign, who was now in that country, but disguised and unknown, working for the same purpose. She herself

possessed a character too superior, and a mind too highly cultivated to set much value on the "pomp and circumstance," the gaudy glitter of royal trappings. But she knew their power over the vain, the frivolous, shallow-judging mass of mankind, of which society is chiefly composed, and therefore she held her Court meetings in the more splendidly decorated saloons of the palace of the King: but she was now in her own more quiet dwelling. Her thoughts were running on many subjects, pleasant and unpleasant, but one seemed more exclusively to occupy her mind, for every now and then she turned her eyes to the entrance, and listened as if in expectation of some one. At length the Count Laval was announced, and an officer in the uniform of the royal guards entered.

"Ah, Monsieur le Comte!" she said, "what news do you bring me, good or bad?"

"Alas, your Highness!" he replied, "my news will not please you."

"Is the trial then over?" she inquired. "Have you been in Court while it lasted?"

"The whole time, Madam! I have but now left it. The evidence was such that, although there was much tending to criminate the prisoner, I think she could scarcely have been condemned with any show of justice. But her fate was precipitated by an injudicious attempt to save her on the part of a faithful old servant, who accused himself of the crime. The noble lady could not, would not, suffer such a sacrifice, and therefore told all, — confessed that she was guilty." The Count now related all that had passed, as it has been already told.

"Her advocate," he added, "made a most eloquent defence for his client, relating circumstances of such cold-blooded atrocity on the part of the deceased, as caused a shuddering horror in the Court, and seemed

almost to justify the deed. His apology for the unhappy lady drew tears from the eyes of his audience, but I fear it will avail her little; for her judges dare not commute her sentence, because her death is necessary to the success of the minister's plans."

"Unhappy lady, indeed!" said the Queen, greatly grieved at this account; "and noble-minded too, as I thought; but rash — the slave of impulse. Alas, alas! what can be done to save her?"

"Nothing, I fear," he replied. "To-morrow she is to be brought up to hear the sentence. There is no time."

"To-morrow!" she cried with a face of dismay: "there is, indeed, no time."

After a short pause, she said earnestly, "I have it greatly at heart to save this lady; first on her son's account, and now for her own sake too, since I have listened to the tale you have told me. Justice would not condemn her to a felon's death

for a crime so wholly unpremeditated, committed in a moment of frenzy. But justice she will not have; and am I, the only sister of its monarch, so powerless in France, that I cannot prevent, or even delay, this judicial murder—for such it will be; a trial hurried over with such indecent haste. Now, too, when I had formed such high hopes, when the King is actually on the road, as I know; for I despatched a messenger to say his presence was imperatively required in Paris; when I was so sure of obtaining at least a pardon, if not an acquittal."

"Yes, Madam, it is known that his Majesty is on the road," said the Count; "and this it is, without doubt, which has occasioned what you so justly call indecent haste. The minister fears the King's arrival may wrest the victim from his grasp."

"Yes," she said eagerly, "yes, could I see my brother—plead the cause myself, I

am sure I should succeed. Can nothing be done to delay, to procrastinate this mockery of justice, — for the execution will quickly follow the sentence?"

"I know not, indeed, your Highness," said the Count thoughtfully, and speaking slowly, "unless—unless some impediment should arise, some accident happen, on the passage of the prisoner from the Châtelet to the Tournelles."

"Accident!" said the Queen, with a face suddenly changing from the grave and anxious expression, to one of cheerfulness and hope, readily catching the idea. "Ah yes: it is not impossible but some accident might delay the sentence: — I must go forth to-morrow. At what hour is the prisoner to be brought into Court?"

"At eight o'clock."

"Ah! we must also go forth at an early hour. We have pressing affairs to regulate."

"We must not interfere with the officers

of justice," said the Count with a grave face.

"Oh no: certainly not! We have far too much respect for the laws. But among other things, we have a visit of ceremony to make, and must have a sufficient escort—a guard of honour," replied the lady, with a tone equally grave, but a sort of dimpling round her handsome mouth showed indications of a smile. "If you commanded the escort Count, and you knew our business to be urgent, would you not clear the way for us?"

"Assuredly, Madam! It would be my duty to obey Your Highness' commands."

"And if, in clearing the road for us to pass, a few of the lieges should be upset — how could it be helped?" now laughing outright, like a true woman as she was, delighted with the idea of at once defeating the plans of the minister whom she hated, rescuing his destined victim, in whose fate she was so warmly

interested, and repaying thus the obligation she owed to the young Count Herman.

The Count de Laval, still trying to look grave, could not, however, prevent his mouth from exhibiting its ample width, and the strong white teeth which garnished it, as he replied, "I shall endeavour to execute the orders of your Majesty in such a way as will defeat the plans of a bad man, without showing disrespect to the laws. There were many noble gentlemen in Court to-day, who listened to the poor lady's tale with pity and sympathy, and who would gladly show their chivalry in such a cause. Fear not that we shall fail to do our best to serve your Highness and her."

With a low bow he prepared to depart.

"We shall confidently rely on your skill and prowess, noble Captain of our hosts, when we go forth in our war-chariots to smite the Philistines," she said gaily, animated by the sanguine confidence of

success, which belonged to her enthusiastic character. "But, before you go, let us see where lies the road to the field of battle. Come hither, and bring me that paper I gave thee in charge yesterday," she called out to a page, who stood with two ladies at the other end of the room.

It was a rude map of Paris and its environs. On examination it appeared there were several ways by which a person might pass from the Châtelet to the Tournelles, so that she was compelled to leave the arrangement suspended, and trust to the sagacity and address of the Count, who now took his leave.

The sleep of Herman was profound, though not "dreamless," and continued till the early morning, when he was again roused by the appearance of the indefatigable Pedrillo, who came followed by Fritz and a servant of the *auberge*, bearing materials for a breakfast. He hastily

dressed himself, anxiously inquiring what news he brought.

"Why not much," he replied; "indeed not any. But sit down, sir, and eat and drink. I came to refresh your memory on this score. We must have no more of these unwholesome fits of fasting: 'tis a bad habit. Take this cup of good old wine: a man must eat and drink, if he would be of use to any body. Now a slice of the boar's flesh."

"Yes," said Herman, taking the food and wine forced on him with such officious kindness. "But what brought you here so early? it is scarcely light."

"No, but I wanted to see you—to see how your strength and courage kept up," he said, hesitating; "and I do see you look wan and faded, spite of the good night's rest you say you have had."

He rose as he spoke, muttering to him-

self, "No, no, I will not tell him; he is not fit for such work now."

Low and indistinctly as these half uttered words came forth, Herman's ear, sharpened by anxiety, caught their import. There *was* something to tell, and, seizing him by the arm as he was about to leave the room, he said, "If you think you are going without saying what brought you here, you are mistaken, for I will not suffer you to leave me till I know. Had not time been precious, you would not have been here so early, nor have left a good breakfast almost untouched."

"Well, Señor," he replied, apparently still undecided what to do. "You are perhaps right." After reflecting a moment, he continued, with his eyes on the ground, and talking to himself rather than to his companion, "There will certainly be fighting; but that's his trade, he's used to it. I am

better at scheming." Raising his eyes to Herman's face, he added, "It would have been better for you to have been left quiet a little while. But you would *not* be quiet I see; so I may as well tell you that Lady Felsenberg is to be brought up for judgment to-day. It is thought that some obstruction may arise in one of the streets through which she must pass, that will afford an opportunity of attempting to rescue her. But the time is so short since this idea has been started, that I believe no regular plan has yet been formed. This is all I can tell you; but come along, since you will, I know, insist on a share in the fray; we shall get intelligence as we go."

Ill satisfied with this loose and vague account of a project so deeply interesting to him, Herman was proceeding to cross-examine his companion; but scarcely had they descended into the street, when he was joined by a man, apparently belonging to a

low class of society, with whom he entered into a conversation, the words of which occasionally reached his ear, but he obtained no information from them.

Thus constrained to silence and his own restless and uneasy thoughts, he endeavoured to fashion some plan by which he might aid his mother. But what could he hope to do, alone and unaided, except by Pedrillo's scheming brain, and the strong and willing arm of Fritz, who was at his side? And it seemed there was already a crude, half-formed scheme afloat; but by whom, and where to be carried into execution?

Irritable and impatient, he broke in upon the discourse, which was going on at his elbow, with an angry exclamation

"Have patience! wait a bit, Señor," said Pedrillo. "I am getting information, and will tell you in a minute."

They had now traversed several streets,

all still and quiet, for it was yet early, and were approaching the neighbourhood of the Châtelet, when they were met by two men, mounted on handsome and mettlesome horses. One of them wore the uniform of an officer of mercenaries, or *Aventuriers*, as they were called; the other had the air and appearance of a Maquignon, or horse-dealer. A sign of recognition was furtively and quietly exchanged between them and Pedrillo. They passed on a short distance, turned their horses, and sat still in their saddles; while they continued their way till they came to the Place du Châtelet, where the stranger quitted them, and Pedrillo was about to speak to Herman, when the massy door of the prison suddenly opened.

Quietly, and in compact order, came forth a band of Archers, followed by a hand-litter borne by four men; another band of Archers formed a rear-guard.

"Ha!" said Pedrillo, with a vexed and

frowning face, as the Archers closed round the litter, the curtains of which were closely drawn, so as to admit of no glance within. "Ha! an hour before the time, and the escort doubled. They are on their guard."

Without delay they now joined the few stragglers whom accident or curiosity had brought together at this early hour, and followed the procession.

Presently they passed again the two horsemen, who also fell into the ranks of the curious who followed the brisk march of the Archers. When they reached an open space, where several streets branched off, Pedrillo slackened his pace for a moment, and the horsemen reined in their horses. The Archers crossed the Place, and entered a narrow street leading from it. Instantly Pedrillo turned to the horsemen, and exclaimed, "*La Rue Traversière.* Away, away! Spare not the spur."

"It is Bel' Occhi; the other I know not," said Herman to himself, as the two spirited horses sprang forward in different directions, and were out of sight in a moment after.

They now hurried on again, to overtake the convoy of the prisoner, and had no time to talk. But as soon as they came up with it, Pedrillo said, in a low voice, "We knew not, until now, the road they would take, and could not therefore fix on a place to attempt a rescue. It is to be the *Rue Traversière;* but how it is to be set about I know not even now. All that I have been able to learn is, that my Royal Lady has engaged some three or four noble gentlemen to aid us. I wish they would have left it to me to arrange a plan; I should have done it with little or no fighting, which I fear will not now be the case. There are too many cooks, and the broth will be spilled, or spoiled."

While Pedrillo was thus speaking in a

doubting and dissatisfied tone, and Herman striving to comprehend their plan, or rather to form one for himself — for he could not learn that one had actually been thought of — they were still advancing towards the *Rue Traversière*, and soon after entered it. It was a narrow street, which made a short cut to the *Rue St. Antoine*, in which the *Tournelles* (at once a royal residence and a court of justice) was situated.

There were already a good many persons assembled, and more came flocking up every minute, augmenting the crowd, among whom were several horsemen, whose appearance but ill accorded with that of their steeds — for they were high-bred and handsome; their riders appeared to belong to a low class.

As they advanced, a *charette*, or market-cart, which was coming from the *Quartier St. Antoine*, forced the Archers to break their ranks, and divide, in order to pass.

But the horse which drew it, (a heavy, clumsy, unmanageable beast,) frightened by the glitter of their arms, or from some other unexplained cause, began to plunge and rear in such a manner as to fling to the ground the baskets of vegetables and fruit, and compel the men who were in it to get out, and try to turn it; for the obstinate beast had now placed itself and the cart right across the street, so that it was scarcely possible to pass at all.

Almost at the same instant was heard from the opposite end of the street, and coming up fast behind them, the trampling of horses, and cries of, "Gare! gare!—place! room! Make way for *la très haute et puissante Dame de Navarre!*" and a party of the Royal Guards were seen in rapid advance, clearing the way for a horse-litter, in which sat two ladies, the Queen of Navarre and Tornalina.

At the first sound of "Gare, gare!" and

of the horses' hoofs, the officer who commanded the prisoner's escort advanced to the restive horse which barred the passage, apparently intending to cleave its skull with the weapon in his hand, but, on looking round, evidently changed his mind.

Whatever were the observations he made in the single moment allowed him for that purpose, they were not pleasant to him; for he scowled fearfully, and ground between his closed teeth a tremendous oath, and the exclamation, "They shall not have her!"

"Close your ranks, and look to the prisoner!" he shouted to his men. At the same time he leaped across the street, and thundered for admittance at the *porte-cochère*, or great gates, of a large mansion, crying in a loud voice,—"*Ouvrez, ouvrez! De par le Roi, au nom de la Justice, ouvrez la porte!*"

A *guichet* was unclosed, and a face peeped out.

Again he shouted to his men, "Keep your ground! *Serrez vos rangs!*" and to the face at the *guichet*, "In the King's name, open the door, or refuse at your peril!"

It was easy enough to give the order to his men to keep their ground, but very difficult to obey it. Blocked up in front, hotly pressed on behind, borne down by the force of numbers driving on them, they inevitably gave way. At this critical moment the *porte-cochère* opened, and the voice of the officer was again heard amid the din of oaths, execrations, and the clash of arms: "Forward! advance! On, on! Bear in the litter!"

The bearers sprang forward, the Archers followed, and a mingled throng of friends and enemies rushed pell-mell into the court-yard, as the heavy doors swung back on their hinges. Among them were Pedrillo, Herman, and Fritz. The tall and martial figure of the Baron de Montmorency was

also seen towering above the crowd, his lofty and noble bearing contrasting strangely with the coarse and common garments which clothed him. A fierce contest now began, the gates having been hastily closed by the Archers, well aware they could admit no more friends without giving entrance also to their enemies.

But soon it was seen that, though in numbers nearly equal, the hearty enthusiasm which animated the rescuing party gave them a decided advantage over the hirelings of the law. A reinforcement became absolutely necessary, and again the active officer sprang to the gates, opened the *guichet*, looked out, and raised his arm to remove the bar which fastened them; when a woman, hitherto unnoticed, who had entered, or been driven in by the crowd, threw herself on him, and seized his arm. To strike her to the earth, and withdraw the bolts, was the work of a moment.

The scream of the woman drew the attention of some of the combatants; Pedrillo and Herman both sprang forward, but too late to prevent an accession of strength to their enemies.

"Take up the woman and put her in some corner," said Herman, hastily; he had not time to see if she was hurt, or even to look at her, for they were now fearfully overmatched. A number of desperate fighting fellows, who had been unwillingly excluded, were waiting without, watching the *guichet* in expectation of a signal, which was at length given; and five of them leaped in, when a rush forward by their opponents compelled them again to close the gates.

The now unequal contest had continued only a few minutes, when Pedrillo was seen endeavouring to gain the attention of the Baron de Montmorency, but did not at first succeed, so hotly was he engaged in the fray. At length he was compelled to pause

for breath, when he made another and more successful effort.

The Baron bent down to listen. The communication seemed to please him, for he nodded his head, as if in assent to some proposition, with a cheerful face. He, in his turn, whispered a word or two, which passed with telegraphic despatch among the party, and a desperate onslaught was made on the litter-bearers, and guards who surrounded it. So sudden and simultaneous was the attack that, spite of superior numbers, they were fairly driven from their post to the other side of the court-yard, and their places taken by the prisoner's friends. But this could not last long. In a very short time they were compelled in their turn to retreat, and the Archers again guarded the litter.

Now, apparently hopeless of success, the Baron and his party slackened their efforts to subdue their opponents, and stood only

on the defensive. This was the signal of victory to the myrmidons of justice. The command was given to raise the litter and march. The *porte-cochère* was again unbarred; the whole party sallied forth triumphant; and, followed by those of their comrades who were waiting in the street, bore off the hardly earned prize, for many of them carried with them lasting memorials of the fray.

Scarcely had they passed when the Baron was seen striding over the dead and wounded, bearing in his arms the poor woman, wrapped in her old brown cloak, who had been so rudely dashed to the earth by the Exempt. The instant he appeared at the door, a horse was led forward; he mounted, and galloped off, followed by other horsemen.

"And thus ends this ill-arranged plan to rescue my unhappy mother!" said Herman, again relapsing into despair. "What could

they hope or expect from a scheme so loose, a force so inefficient?"

"Not much, in truth!" replied Pedrillo, who now joined him. "My Royal Lady trusted to these men of the sword, and they are never of any use except in aiding men of mind to carry out their plans. The sword is a sorry weapon without a head to guide the hand that wields it! I am no *sabreur*, and I have done more good service in this affair than all these mighty men. Come, sir, let us away to the Court! By the blessed St. Anthony and his pig, but you are comical figures, both of you!" he added, turning to look at Herman and his man Fritz.

It must be confessed the appearance of these "youthful warriors" was somewhat grotesque. Finding the monks' frocks they wore muffled and impeded their movements, they had hastily tucked up the sleeves and rolled the skirts round their waist, exhibiting the jack-boots and leathern galligaskins,

covered with thin plates of iron, (a sort of half armour then commonly worn,) in strange contrast with the canonicals on their shoulders.

Herman, infinitely too miserable to care about his appearance, was nevertheless disgusted that Pedrillo could mock his sorrows by jesting at such a moment.

Pedrillo looked in his grave, sad face, and was instantly again serious and respectful. "Come, sir," he said, "take courage! our good cause is not yet lost. Come with me to the Court. I pledge my head that you will not hear Lady Felsenberg condemned!"

Herman scarcely believed him; and yet, in the present state of his mind, hardly able to arrange his ideas sufficiently to allow him to form an opinion for himself, he willingly leaned on any prop that offered support to his mental weakness, and turned to any point that presented a ray of light

to cheer the gloomy night of grief by which he was surrounded. Mechanically he followed him to the street, which was now nearly empty.

The Lady of Navarre had gone on her way. The curious crowd had followed the Archers, and the market people had departed with their goods. A few persons were, however, still lounging round the house, and several horsemen still sat in their saddles, looking round occasionally, as if waiting for orders, or in expectation of some one.

"We must endeavour to get horses," said Pedrillo, as they passed on, applying, as he spoke, to a man who was mounted on one, and held another by the bridle. His request was refused with a sneer; but, nothing daunted, he went close up to him and uttered a few cabalistic words, which changed at once his determination He dismounted, and gave up quietly the two horses. They mounted and rode off.

All these events, which have taken so long to tell, had succeeded each other so rapidly that, when they arrived at the entrance of the Tournelles, it was not more than an hour beyond the time originally appointed for the appearance of the prisoner. The Court was much less crowded than on the preceding day, so that they were able to place themselves conveniently. A short delay took place, during which Herman turned his eye towards his companion's face, and was greatly puzzled by its expression. His mouth was screwed up into a most decorous gravity, but there was "a laughing devil in his eye" that mocked its demureness.

Cheered, though he knew not why, and strangely bewildered between hope and fear, Herman continued to watch him, and the entrance by which he expected his mother to enter. At length she came, not as before, walking forward with a graceful

and dignified air, but closely wrapped up in the large furred cloak she had thrown off the day before, as she took the seat allotted her, and borne in the arms of a strong man of the Archer's Guard, as if unable to support herself. The morning was cold and raw, and she was closely enveloped in its folds. It was removed, and a female, but not Lady Felsenberg, appeared.

"Gracious Heaven, it is Michelette!" exclaimed Herman astonished, "where then is my mother?"

"No doubt it is Michelette," replied Pedrillo, chuckling with satisfaction at having outwitted the "snapping turtles," as he called the officers of justice. "Fine feathers make fine birds; and as they were lucky enough, after a good deal of hard fighting, to capture the miniver mantle of Madame la Comtesse, they had better wrap Michelette in it again, thus turning

their crow into a nightingale, try to make her sing to the Court. As to your lady mother, she borrowed Michelette's old cloak, and went home with the Baron as I believe; so now, if you like, we will go and see what is become of them. He has a house in *La Rue des Tisserands*, and I daresay he would make for that, as it is not far from the field of battle."

"But tell me," said Herman, "how this change was effected. How came Michelette there? and why did we not follow the Baron, rather than waste time by coming here?"

"Here's a string of questions! which am I to answer first? But come along; I will explain it all as we go."

They mounted, and again rode off down the *Rue St. Antoine*, till they came to the entrance of the *Rue des Tisserands*.

CHAPTER X.

"Now," said Pedrillo, as they rode on side by side, "I may speak again, for in the Court, surrounded as we were by sharp-eared spies and cunning listeners, I was afraid even to whisper; and, to answer your last question first, we did not follow the Baron, because it would have been bad policy to attract the notice of curious eyes, by swelling his train, which was already too large. We went to the Court, to have the pleasure of seeing the gentlemen who belong to it unpack the prize, for which they fought so stoutly. And as for Michelette, she was, it seems, acciden-

tally forced into the court-yard, by the rush of the crowd, in which she was entangled; although she voluntarily set out in the morning, hoping in some way to aid a cause in which she was greatly interested. From Miraflores she learned what was in agitation about a rescue. He and Bel' Occhi have both been active in the business. They applied to her for garments of disguise, the loan of which is a part of her trade. No sooner was she aware of the relationship between you and the prisoner, than she set heartily to work to aid us; not only sending her husband and every one she could influence, but bespeaking also the services of *La Flamande*, a strong and courageous woman, who came with her to the scene of action. All this she told me in a few words, for we had not much time for conversation. I no sooner knew who she was, than I conceived the project of playing these

cunning men of the law a trick, by substituting a piece of common crockery for the china vase. Michelette readily agreed to play her part in the farce. A hint to the brave Baron of our plan was enough. We surrounded the litter, from which the bearers and the guards were, for a short time, driven. The exchange was quickly made. Michelette, wrapped in my lady's miniver mantle, played the part of a great person; and Madame la Comtesse, covered with the old brown cloak of Michelette, was laid down in a corner, from which the Baron raised and bore her off. Michelette got a sad blow in trying to prevent the admission of additional force to our opponents, but she bore it patiently. She is a true woman in this respect, and would sooner consent to be hewed in pieces than give up a cause to which she is devoted."

While Pedrillo was speaking, two horsemen overtook and passed them, riding at

furious speed. In one of them they recognised the very active officer who had commanded the escort of the prisoner. "Ha, ha!" said he laughing, "they have made the discovery that their swan is only a goose."

Soon after came up also, in a quick march, the band that had formed the convoy, still bearing visible marks of the fray on their persons and dress, and again he laughed; but as they entered the *Rue des Tisserands*, his mockery and jesting ceased, and his face became grave. The unusual number of people flocking in, the bustle and excitement which seemed to animate them, as they hurried on, spake little of the ordinary quiet he hoped to have found. On inquiring of one of them what was the matter, he replied that a prisoner had escaped, and was said to be concealed in the *Hôtel de Créque*, which belonged to the Baron de Montmorency.

They pushed their horses on through the crowd, which thickened as they advanced, till they were nearly opposite the house, which was surrounded by a band of Arquebusiers; some of whom, armed with axes and hammers, were endeavouring to open a passage through the massy gates.

"Ha!" said Pedrillo, with an angry flush on his face, "this comes of the obstinate folly of that Baron, with his Court chivalry, that would insist on bearing off the prisoner himself, instead of letting me or some other unknown person do it. I warned him of this, but he would have his own way. As if it was an every day occurrence, to see a noble Baron so careful about the comfort and safety of a poor low woman, as to carry her away on his own horse. Chivalry indeed! An ounce of brains, of which these great Barons have so small a stock, is worth all the chivalry of France."

It was, in fact, precisely as he surmised. The circumstance of a powerful nobleman taking so warm an interest in the fate of a woman of a low class, had excited the curiosity and attention of the bystanders, one of whom had seen the *chaussure* of the female, the fine unwrinkled stocking, the natty shoe, (instead of the naked foot and heavy wooden *sabot*,) which ill accorded with the mean coarse cloak in which she was wrapped. The observations he made reached the ear of one more awake to its import, and more interested in the result of the affair

The alarm was given, and scarcely had the Baron congratulated himself and his charge on their successful manœuvre, than the arrival of a band of arquebusiers before his gates, was announced to him, by repeated demands for admittance, in the King's name.

Pedrillo continued to utter his denuncia-

tions and anathemas against empty-headed chivalry, and men of the sword; but receiving no answer, he turned to look at his companion, and saw that his face looked withered and shrunk, his eyes dull and heavy, and his whole frame was shaken as with ague. Grieved and alarmed, he inquired if he was ill. He shook his head without reply, but as it was evident he could scarcely keep the saddle, Pedrillo said, "Come, sir, we can do no good here, we will return to your lodging. They will not easily get through those thick gates. There is nothing to fear on that score!"

The latter part of this speech was kindly intended to raise a hope in Herman's mind; but on him to whom it was addressed it had no effect. He felt neither hope nor fear.

A complete apathy and indifference had succeeded to the violent and long continued

excitement he had lately undergone. Accordingly they now turned their horses' heads in another direction, and soon arrived at Herman's present abode. Fortunately Fritz was already there, for his master now needed all the care a faithful servant could give him. The chill and shivering was succeeded by fever and delirium, and for many days the patient was released from mental suffering, by the complete derangement of the physical frame.

Pedrillo having administered some hot wine, and aided Fritz in getting him to bed, stood beside it with a sad face. The noble integrity, the generous spirit, and warm-hearted kindness of Herman, had so won upon him, as they gradually developed themselves, that he was now sincerely attached to him.

He had hitherto known little of mankind, except their vices. A character at once

frank, simple, and sincere, yet brave, intelligent, and high-minded, had shown him human nature in a new light, and given him a sort of vague longing to secure his good opinion. But his duties were of a nature too active and pressing to admit of his lingering by the sick man's bed: he therefore made the best arrangements he could for him, and with slow and reluctant steps departed.

Meantime, while it was thus beleaguered without, within the Hôtel de Créqui a sharp discussion was going on. In a room on the ground floor, called the Cedar Parlour, from the circumstance of its being panelled with sweet scented cedar wood, while with one of the anomalies of that rude age, the floor was paved with *dalles*, or common flag-stones; in this room were assembled a small party of gentlemen, among whom the tall martial form of the Baron de Montmorency, the broad shoulders,

and honest, good-humoured face of the Count de Laval, and the slighter and more symmetrical figure of Bel' Occhi, were conspicuous; all of them about forty years of age, more or less. They were seated at a table, at which also sat two others; one of them Le Sieur de Liancourt, just arrived at manhood; the other, the Chevalier de Montmorency, nearly related to the Constable Marshal Montmorency, and more distantly to the Baron, who was a branch of the same family.

The Chevalier was scarcely eighteen, and distinguished by *une barbe naissante;* yet was his face characterized by an expression of wariness and craft, that would have better suited a beard actually borne.

"I can see no good in holding out longer," said this gentleman, "since there is no hope of ultimate escape for her."

"Craven!" exclaimed the Baron, turn-

ing on him a fierce eye, "hast thou not — have we not all pledged our word as gentlemen, to the sister of our sovereign? have we not sworn by the holy rood, never to give up this lady until the King's return, and only at his command? But thou wert never hearty in the cause! I would I could put thee into the street, that thou might aid the *canaille* to batter down my gates; a place more fit for thee, false scion of a noble stock, than the company of honourable men!"

"Nay, my Lord Baron," said the young man; "your language is too harsh. Show me but a reasonable prospect of success, and I will be the first to dare all in its achievement."

"I will show thee nothing, knave!" replied the Baron angrily. "Why didst thou meddle with men's work ere thy beard and thy courage had time to grow?"

"Have you no secret hiding-place, where

the lady might be concealed?" inquired Le Sieur de Liancourt.

"Tush! not I. I have a strong arm and a firm will; with these will I defend *her* and my plighted word," said the Baron, rising from his seat, and drawing away Bel' Occhi and the Count Laval into another part of the room, when he continued, "We will speak no more on the subject before these unfledged birdlets. I do suspect this Chevalier to be no better than a traitor. He is gaping with open mouth for some good thing from Duprat, and has crept into our company the better to mar our plan."

A short silence followed this ebullition of anger on the part of the Baron, who, if he had not the very best head in the world, was nevertheless, to use another French expression, "brave as his sword," and quite determined to sacrifice his life rather than his word.

After a short pause he said, in a more temperate tone, "For myself, I have made up my mind. I am already fully committed in this affair. The disguise I put on in the morning was soon lost sight of. I am known to have taken a decided part in resisting the officers of justice. But this is not the case with you, gentlemen; it is for you, therefore, to consider what is to be done. I have not in the house, at present, more than a dozen efficient men; and though it will take some hours to get through the gates with hammers and axes only, they will soon seek for more expeditious means to force an entrance."

Another pause of silence ensued, during which the Count Laval walked up and down the room with his arms folded. The heavy spurs attached to his military boots, clanking on the stone floor, was the only sound heard in the Cedar Parlour for some time;

while the light from the blazing wood on the hearth, gleaming on his face, (for it was getting dark,) showed a countenance expressing hesitation and perplexity.

The uniform he wore, indicating, as it did, a distinguished rank as an officer of the Royal Guards, rendered a breach of the laws on his part doubly outrageous; yet to give up a lady he had sworn to protect was quite out of the question. While he continued to ruminate, and strive to strike out some plan by which to reconcile duties equally imperative, and altogether inimical, Bel' Occhi said something in a low voice to the Baron, apparently making some strange proposal, for he exclaimed, "Ha!" as if somewhat startled; but after a minute's consideration he said, in a decided tone, "It shall be done! it is the only plan that offers a chance of success."

He arose as he spoke, opened the door of an ante-room, and called out, "Who waits? send Troquilet to me."

"A gray-headed, but hale old man, presented himself. The Baron spoke with him apart. As he listened to his instructions, the ruddy hue of his cheeks faded to a bluish tint, and his limbs trembled. He seemed about to speak, but his master stopped him, by saying sternly, "See to it, old man! It is my will: let it be done!"

Troquilet bent his head, and retired.

We must now return again to Pedrillo, who, as he quitted the house where Herman now lay scorched with fever, and wildly raving, hastened again to the *Rue des Tisserands*, to see what was going on there, that he might be the better able to give in his report, when he should go to the palace for fresh instructions.

The short day had now nearly closed, and night was fast stealing on, as he reached the crowded street once more. The Hôtel was still surrounded, and every thing seemed nearly in the same state as before, except

that the men with axes and hammers were no longer at work. They had probably found them of little use, and were waiting for more effective weapons of attack.

He was now about to pursue his way, when a shout from the crowd again roused his attention, and he looked round. A dense volume of smoke rose above the gates of the Hôtel, and a column of flame shot up in the midst of it. A cry of "Fire! fire! the Hôtel is on fire!" rung through the air. A dark red light spread over the sky, deepening in its lurid brightness as the night closed in. Again a broad column of flame shot up, illuminating the roofs of the houses, the steeples and spires of the churches and convents, and gleaming on the faces of the crowd; who, at every fresh burst of flame, responded to its fearful grandeur by another shout.

At this moment the massy doors were thrown open, and a small, but compact band

of men, surrounding and guarding five or six pale and terrified women, rushed forth with an impulse so impetuous as to render it irresistible. The archers and arquebusiers, although on the alert, from the sound of the falling bars and the grating bolts, were violently driven back on those near them; and they, in their turn, recoiling on others, a terrible scene of uproar and confusion ensued. The shouts and oaths of the men, the screams of the women, and the clash of arms, mingling with the roaring of the flames and the crashing, thundering noise of the rending timbers, and falling masses of stone from the burning building, altogether created a crazing chaos of sounds.

The terrified populace now fled in dismay, except a few fiercer spirits, to whom conflict and battle are pastimes; and who, siding with one or other of the belligerent parties, helped to determine the victory. The evident aim of the contending powers

here was, the one to gain, the other to hold possession of the women. The pertinacity with which they were protected, convinced the soldiers that the prisoner (for whose recapture a large reward was offered) was among them ; and they fought as desperately to seize them as the Baron's band did to prevent their being seized. The combat was fierce but short. Two women and a few men were captured, the greater number fled and escaped, spite of the active energy of their enemies and the bright light of the flames.

Pedrillo, who at the very first indication that the gates were about to open, foreseeing a furious conflict, prudently retreated to a safer distance, where he might play the part of spectator rather than actor in the fearful melodrama he anticipated, — not being famed for military prowess, although greatly interested in the result.

Just as the contest closed and the con-

querors were about to depart with their captives, the heavy clouds burst, and a torrent of rain fell hissing on the burning pile, nearly extinguishing the flames, which, after a short time, only flared up at intervals; and Pedrillo hurried off with the scattering crowd, talking to himself as he often did when without a companion, as if better able to draw inferences and settle difficulties, when he presented them to his ear as they arose in his brain.

"No, no," he soliloquized. "*She* was not there, and bandied about in that rude conflict. Baron chivalry would never dream of putting a LADY in such a pickle, as those poor women, who must be half-dead with fright, besides many a hard thump. But then they are only women, not ladies — the coarse pitchers of society — made of different materials; better able to bear kicks and cuffs. No, she was not among them. It was a ruse, a stratagem. They were

but geese. Where then can be the swan?"

With his journey his soliloquy terminated, and happily also his day's work, for a busy, an exciting, a memorable day had it been; and thoroughly weary was he when, at midnight, he threw himself on his bed to recruit his forces for fresh exertions on the morrow.

Assuredly, however well he might be recompensed for his services, his place was no sinecure. If it held out a fair prospect for the future, he may be said to have honestly earned it, although he was compelled, by the nature of the work in which he was employed, to use a good deal of roguery and deception in the course of his operations. Already a most expert tactician, he was now engaged in an affair that not only gave ample scope to his talents, and the knowledge he had before obtained, but promised also to furnish opportunities of

completing his education as an accomplished deceiver, an adept in the art of appearing what he was not, and hiding what he was.

Nature indeed seemed to have fitted him to play many parts on the world's stage, for she had bestowed upon him many and greatly varying talents.

CHAPTER XI.

Five days had elapsed since that on which occurred the many strange circumstances we narrated in the last chapter, and which had been the subject of discussion in the different societies of Paris during this time. The burning of the Hotel de Créqui was said by some to be an act of chivalric devotion on the part of the Baron de Montmorency, to the cause of a lady under his protection, and lauded as such; while by others it was characterized as the folly of a madman,—a tremendous sacrifice made to no purpose, since it could not ensure the safety of her for whom it was done. These

were the sentiments of the contending powers, and their respective partisans, contradistinguished as Legalists and Royalists, or Dupratists and Navarresas.

Animated and frequent were the debates, and great the interest excited on both sides, but sustained in secret, — for legality and loyalty were opposed to each other, — law and equity (as they often are) were at variance in this affair; so that neither party dared openly to avow their opinions and their wishes, and neither party seemed to know what had become of the cause of all this intrigue and cabal.

A thousand varying rumours were afloat on the subject. Some asserted, positively, that the lady had perished in the flames. Others maintained that the guards had been bribed, and she had quitted the hotel through the stables in the *Ruelle St. Jacques.* But the greater number believed she had been one of the little band of women who

had contributed so much to augment the fury of the fight, and that she had escaped.

The King had not yet arrived. He was said to have reached Orleans on his return, and there to have fallen sick. The Navarresas said his physician was in the pay of the Minister, and his malady the result of the critical state of affairs which made his absence necessary.

On the evening of the fifth day, which, like the preceding ones, had been dark and stormy, a cold north-easterly wind was blowing, and heavy showers of sleety rain fell from time to time. A brown muddy current was running through the middle of the *Rue des Tisserands*, the earth of which was so saturated that the foot passengers were in some parts ankle deep in mire.

Among the few who now entered it were seen, about five o'clock, an old woman with a basket on her arm, her clothes drenched and dripping, followed by a ragged and

miserable looking man, bearing two wooden kegs in wicker frames, suspended from a yoke on his shoulders, (as milk is carried here.) As they came opposite the Hotel de Créqui, they crossed and attempted to pass along the *Ruelle St. Jacques.* But the narrow street was nearly blocked up by the stones and rubbish of the ruined building. The only clear space was occupied by a sentinel, who, with measured but quick steps, passed up and down before an opening in the high wall which had once been a doorway.

They now turned, and moved on to the front of the Hôtel. The gates were gone, but the masonry of the gateway-arch still stood, blackened by the flames which had consumed them. Here also a sentinel was posted and passing to and fro, occasionally stopping to stamp and slap himself with one hand as he held his weapon with the other to warm himself; casting, as he did so,

wistful glances through the arch into the court-yard; which, although also encumbered with rubbish, still afforded space beneath a stone gallery, by which it was surrounded, for a number of his comrades to lounge round the cheerful bivouac fires, fed by the half-burned panels and rafters, and blazing up most invitingly to the shivering creatures without.

As they came opposite the arch, the old woman said, "Stay a bit, Guillaume, I am weary. We will stop a while before we go any farther!"

"Not here, mistress!" shouted the *factionaire*, rudely. "Troop! Be off! We allow no one to stand here!"

"It's a cruel cold evening," said the woman, moving as if in obedience to the order, but, in fact, passing a step or two nearer to him, "and like to be a colder night. I thought, gentle sir, you might want a drop of brandy. I should be glad to get a

few *deniers*. It shall cost you nothing for a sample."

"No!" he replied, "we must not drink while on duty. It is forbidden."

"A cup of brandy is soon swallowed, and none the wiser," she said quietly, now near enough to place a full cup within his reach, judging from the hesitation of his tone that she ran no great risk of refusal.

"It is right good," he said, returning the wooden measure: "if thou couldst put me down a quart it would comfort my cold stomach when my guard is relieved."

"I have no vessel to put it in, unless I may seek one within, excellent sir."

"Well, well, thou mayest enter," he said, hesitating. "Get thee in! and thou mayest dry thy petticoats if they will let thee. But hark ye," he added, stopping her as she was about to pass, "thou shalt take this permission in lieu of money for thy brandy."

The woman assented, saying, "I shall

maybe make a better bargain with the other gentlemen."

She went in, followed by the man with the brandy kegs, and was approaching one of the fires, when a subaltern started up, exclaiming, "How now, mother; how didst thou get here, where no strangers pass?"

"The gentleman at the gateway sent me in with some brandy, of which he said you had great need, it being so very cold."

"Ha! the rogue! What, he has been tasting it, has he?" said the man, half-frowning, half-laughing.

As he tasted the brandy he pronounced it good, and inquired the price. She told him.

"A fair price for good liquor; but what hast thou in thy basket?"

"*Esprit de Girofle*, and colic-water from Flanders," was the answer. They too were tasted and approved.

"Come," he said, "thou shalt fling me something off the price, and we will take thy stock."

After some chaffering this was agreed to. The conditions were, more to be brought on the morrow, and all to be paid for at a future time; the old dame and her man to be allowed to stay an hour to rest and warm themselves. This arrangement, agreeable to both parties, added greatly to the hilarity of the soldiers, who began a merry carouse, in which the shivering sentinel soon after took a part, having been relieved.

Something more than an hour had passed, when the subaltern suddenly starting up, exclaimed, "Where the devil is the old woman and her man?"

No one knew. Such as were sober enough got up, and raising brands from the fires, sought for them; the sentinel declaring no one had gone out. Presently they

were discovered in a dark corner, both fast asleep.

The subaltern was about to rouse and expel them, when their first friend, warmed into a kindly mood by the brandy, and the comfortable change in his position, interposed with, "Let them alone, poor toads! Don't grudge them an hour's rest; thou knowest well enough it is all the payment they will ever get for the good liquor they have furnished."

Touched with this remonstrance, and well aware of the truth of the latter part of the speech, the sleepers were left to their repose. The soldiers returned to their cups, and continued their revelry till it sunk in silence, and they also slept.

The woman now stretched forth her arm and grasped that of her companion. They both arose, and crept quietly down a dark passage near which they had lain; here they groped along till they reached a flight of

steps, at the bottom of which lay another long stone passage. In the middle of this they stopped, and the woman uttered the word "Justice." They listened, but no answer was returned.

They went on feeling their way, and again the word "Justice" was pronounced; but no sound was heard save a distant laugh, now and then a few notes of a song, and a word or two uttered in a higher tone, from a company of officers who were sitting over a late supper in one of the rooms of the hôtel, whose walls were still upright, and supported a roof to shelter them.

Standing in this passage, undecided whether to advance or retreat, the woman a third time repeated the word, and a low voice close to them echoed it.

"Justice for all," said the woman.

"Right," was the reply of the voice, and a cold and trembling hand grasped hers, and drew her onwards along the stone corridor.

Presently the voice whispered "steps," and they descended again.

"Now we may have a light," said the strange voice.

A light was struck, and a torch lighted, which revealed to the brandy merchant the care-worn face, and grey locks of a man of sixty, who now preceded them through a long range of cellarage, strewed with empty wine casks, tumbled about in all directions, some lying staved in pools of the wine they had once contained; many standing erect with their heads knocked in, and buckets beside them which had served to remove their contents.

At length they arrived at a rough wall, from a projecting mass of which the old man withdrew a couple of long stout screws, the heads of which were visible only on close inspection. A part of the brick work slid aside, and revealed a small opening, through which they passed into a square stone-room

furnished with a few necessary articles. A pan of charcoal was burning on the chimney hearth, and a lamp on the table. On a couch near it lay Lady Felsenberg with a pale and melancholy face, but wearing an expression of patient resignation.

A faint flush coloured her cheek at sight of the strangers, and a ray of hope and pleasure beamed in her eye. Grotesque and wretched as their appearance was, she hailed them joyfully as the harbingers of release from her stone prison.

"You bring me company, Troquilet!" she said cheerfully.

"And liberators, I trust, madam," he replied, "although I do not know them. They have the pass-word which my lord the Baron gave me."

"I am Benares, madam! Pedro Benares," said the brandy merchant, advancing towards her and throwing back the hood of the cloak, and exhibiting a head and shoulders that

certainly had nothing feminine about them.

"Pedro Benares!" exclaimed the lady starting up; "ah! you bring me news of my children, of my son. I have heard of you. You have been active, and kind, and persevering in your endeavours to serve him and me. Tell me, tell me," she added eagerly with all her native animation lighting up her face, and speaking rapidly: "Where are they — how are they? Where is my son? is he safe? is he well?"

Pedrillo — for it was indeed the clever little Peter, who had played the part of the brandy merchant, and so ably mystified the arquebusiers, who guarded, day and night, the ruins of the Hôtel de Créqui, in consequence of a vague suspicion that the lost prisoner was concealed somewhere about them — Pedrillo, prepared for the questions so anxiously made, replied evasively with regard to Herman, whose real

situation this was no fitting time to tell. But about the young ladies he answered truly and most satisfactorily: Gertrude was better in health, and they had both been removed from the Châtelet, and placed under the protection of a lady of high respectability, through the influence of the Queen of Navarre, and his own exertions in the same good cause.

He had given this information in a low voice, and as concisely as possible, and he now added, "I must tell you no more now, madam, for time is precious."

"No, no," she said, with the enthusiasm which belonged to her character, "I will not ask another question: I am most thankful, whatever *my* fate may be, my children are safe. May Heaven shower down its blessings on that noble woman's head! she is indeed a Queen, fulfilling the highest, noblest duties, of her lofty state; for she is the friend and consoler of the wretched

and the destitute, the protectress of the oppressed and persecuted!"

While this short dialogue had been carried on, Troquilet and Guillaume had been engaged in an anxious examination of the stone walls of the room, to every part of which, in turn, the light of the torches was directed; but apparently in vain, for no traces of a door or opening could be found, although one was certainly said to have been walled up, (leading through some under-ground passage to the quarries) in consequence of a band of robbers having taken advantage of it, to carry off a large sum of money, belonging to the late Baron. The room presented every where the same uniform masses of stone, far too solid to admit of a hope of making an opening through them.

Pedrillo now turned to Troquilet, to make inquiries, but he declared he knew nothing but what he had learned from old

Madeline, the *femme de charge*, who had aided him to furnish the room with the articles necessary for the accommodation of Lady Felsenberg, at the command of the Baron.

"Ah!" said Pedrillo, "It was to Madeline, the housekeeper, the Count Laval sent me for information. He might as well have told me to question the wall as that crazy old soul, who has never been in her right wits since the night of the fire. This man," he added, turning to Guillaume, "undertook not only to show us the outlet, but also to guide us through the under-ground passages. I am greatly inclined to believe there never was any other opening than the one by which we entered."

"Never any other opening!" repeated the miserable looking creature called Guillaume. "Why, if there had not been a passage, how could we have carried off the money?"

"We!" said Pedrillo to himself, greatly startled, and turning again to examine more minutely the man, than he had hitherto had leisure to do; for much time had been wasted, in consequence of Madeline's inability to give the necessary information; and, after long and active, though secret search, and many inquiries, this man was fished out as having once passed through the door before it was walled up. But he had never dreamed that his companion was, as his words indicated, one of the very band who had committed the robbery, which had been marked by circumstances of great atrocity.

"Here's another pretty mess of the Baron's devising," he muttered to himself: "I should have thought even he might have guessed, that the frolic he provided for her, was not likely to benefit the brain of a woman of seventy. Here am I, and the lady for whose safety he is so anxious,

in the bowels of the earth, with one of the cut-throats who made it necessary to close the outlet."

But he soon saw that, as yet, his safety and that of the lady, were not so seriously compromised, as he at first apprehended. The quiet ordinary tone in which the man spoke announced his belief, that the fact of his being one of the robbers, was well known to the person he addressed; and Pedrillo, with the tact which seldom abandoned him, (even when frightened) said in the same quiet way, "Why, that is true enough! as you say, comrade, if there had not been a door, you could not have gone through it: but where it was seems more difficult to settle."

"Why, here it was," exclaimed the man, suddenly holding up the torch, in a recess about four feet square, close beside the opening by which they had entered. Precisely on this account was it that they

never thought of examining it, and Guillaume had forgotten it, from the improbability of two doors leading in opposite directions, being found side by side.

But so it was, and after removing baskets of wine and provisions, with sundry pots and pans, and other articles, they set to work on the bricks and mortar with the implements which had been provided for the purpose. Working as quietly and with as little noise as they well could, it was more than an hour ere they had made an opening sufficiently large to admit of their passing. One after the other, they crept through, and again descended a long flight of steep and narrow stairs into a winding passage, apparently cut through the earth, which in places had fallen in crumbling masses, and nearly blocked it up. In others, the rain had leaked through, trickled down

the green and humid sides, and collected in stagnant pools on the floor.

But as they advanced, the walls, or sides of the passage, changed their loose and crumbling character, and became firm and rocky; occasionally sparkling with sparry crystallizations, and here and there presented a smooth and polished surface that reflected the smoky light of the torches like a mirror.

After a time, the passage became wider and higher, sometimes opening into a cavernous extent, and they found by the increased toil that they were mounting in slow ascent; but they suffered nothing from cold, the temperature was mild and equable. Now and then the feeble flickering of the torches warned them that the air was deteriorated by unwholesome vapours, and they then advanced with caution.

Nearly an hour and half had passed since they quitted the stone chamber, and they had met with no serious impediment to their progress. They went on, therefore, with hoping hearts and cheerfully; occasionally interchanging a question or two, but far too anxious to talk much, even had it been prudent to do so in such a place, and in such company. Suddenly the silence, which had hitherto been profound, for no living thing — not even a bat, inhabited these under-ground solitudes, was broken by a low moaning sound like the wail of suffering, or a feeble cry for help. Again it came to their ears, and as they advanced more distinctly, but still a low moan, as of one in pain; but no one was visible.

And now, from a cavernous opening, a second passage branched off. Their guide was again at fault: he had forgotten which he ought to take; and no wonder, as he

frankly told Pedrillo — believing his history already known to him — twenty years had gone by, ten of which he had passed in the galleys, since he was there last. Fortunately, this communication was made in that peculiar slang which the uninitiated could not understand: both Troquilet and Lady Felsenberg were, therefore, in happy ignorance of the character of the guide.

After some hesitation, he decided on following the passage which seemed a more immediate continuation of the one they were already in; the other being a narrow ledge of rock, on the brink of a green and slimy pit, lying between the two.

For nearly another half-hour they went on, the way being sometimes wide and straight, and then again narrow and winding, when once more the same sad, melancholy sounds broke on the airless stillness of these subterraneous excavations.

Again Lady Felsenberg looked anxiously

round, and would fain have stopped to search from whence they came; the men only seemed inclined to hurry on the faster. But now their attention was drawn to another subject; for they made the unpleasant discovery that they had wasted nearly an hour, and much strength. They had taken the wrong turn, and were again at the place where the passage branched off beside the pit. They had learned thus the right road at a heavy expense, and, after waiting a moment to trim the torches, were about to proceed, when a shrill, eager, piercing cry for help, for pity, rose, apparently from the pit. The men would again have hurried on, but Lady Felsenberg refused to stir.

"It is a trick, a stratagem to lure us into danger, to destruction perhaps!" exclaimed Pedrillo, considerably excited. "Come on, madam, I entreat you! I would not alarm you unnecessarily, but

we are in no safe place — nor in safe company," he added in a whisper, trying to draw her on. But again that heart-piercing cry of distress, that eager prayer for aid, came to her ear, and, with the natural impetuosity of her character, she said, "I will never stir from this spot. till I have done my utmost to relieve the unhappy creature by whom those dreadful cries are uttered! He is there in the pit. It is not deep," she added, seizing a torch, and holding it out over it, "and there are four of us."

"What help *can* we give?" said Pedrillo, still fearing a decoy, "We have no means to assist him if he is wounded or maimed; we risk our own safety without——"

"We will take him with us. We cannot be far from the end of our journey; we cannot again mistake our way," she said eagerly. "I will carry the torches, and go on before to light you."

Troquilet and Pedrillo were still decidedly opposed thus to risk her safety and their own, and would probably have thought it their duty to have forced her forward, and the poor wretch would have been abandoned: but she found an ally where least expected, in the ill-looking ruffian Guillaume, the guide. Spite of his vices, and long association with the very dregs of society, the man had a heart; and, struck with compassion, at once volunteered to descend into the pit, if the others would assist in drawing him up again.

An unwilling assent was at length given, and he slid down the green and slimy side to the stagnant water in the bottom, (amid which the wretched creature lay,) too shallow to terminate his life by drowning. He was drawn up with less difficulty than had been anticipated, considering the victim was wholly unable to assist himself. Guillaume took him on his back,

and bore him onward with a hearty good will, that seemed to give additional strength to his limbs.

For another half hour they continued to walk on as fast as circumstances admitted, when they would again have mistaken the way, it appeared; for the wounded stranger raised his head, and said, "To the right! you must make your way out by *la petite vacherie.*"

Soon after, they felt a great change in the temperature of the air, which came chill and keen from a distant opening, where the dull, hazy gray of a wintry morning broke on them, in contrast with the light of the single torch which remained unconsumed. The whole night had been spent in this passage.

The opening reached, they passed into a small enclosure, containing a *charette* and some coarse implements of husbandry. At a low door, in the high wall which sur-

rounded it, they knocked for some time in vain, but at length succeeded in rousing a sleepy old man; who, however, positively refused to admit them, till prevailed on by a promise of liberal payment, when he led them through a courtyard to what appeared to be a small farm-house, rudely built, and offering little accommodation. But a party arriving under such circumstances were not likely to be very fastidious; and the rustic loneliness of its situation was a great recommendation, since it held out a promise of security.

Pedrillo, anxious to ascertain their exact position, hastily climbed the rough steps of a steep ascent, and found himself on the heights of Montmartre. The cold and sullen gloom of the morning, which was just breaking, seemed to give a still more desolate appearance to the barren and dreary solitude of the landscape around him, where the only moving thing visible was a wind-mill, slowly

turning its heavy sails in obedience to the faint impulse of an icy breeze, which made him glad to descend again, quite satisfied with his survey. It was just such a place as he wished to find, and he instantly resolved that here Lady Felsenberg should remain for the present. It was lonely and remote, where strangers seldom came.

The wretched creature they had rescued was placed on a bed, apparently dead; but he had only fainted, and soon opened his eyes and asked for wine. Lady Felsenberg stood beside him, wiping the cold dew from his forehead, and earnestly entreating that some one should seek a surgeon.

"No, no!" he said. "It is too late! I will have no leech; he cannot save me, and he shall not torture me. My hours are numbered. Give me wine to allay my raging thirst. This is all you can do for me; I know I must die; but I — was unwilling to die — alone."

Troquilet at this moment came in with bread and wine for the Lady, who was greatly exhausted with fatigue. But the poor creature held out his hand, and followed the cup with an eager eye.

"Give it me!" he said. "I have most need of it."

She carried it to him, and held it to his mouth; but he raised himself with sudden energy, and, seizing it with both hands, drained it in a moment, and held it out to have it refilled.

When he had emptied it a second time he sunk back on the bed, and lay for a short time still. The guide who had done so much for him now inquired how he had got into the dreadful situation in which they found him.

"It was Le Nègre," he replied, "who did it. But it was paid for by another, and richer man. I was his agent; I knew too much."

"Ha! It was Le Nègre!" said the guide; "he does not often leave his work unfinished."

The poor victim was about to speak again; but Lady Felsenberg, seeing that the wine seemed to have revived him, eagerly interposed by saying, "You are better: if you had help you might recover."

"No; it is too late," he repeated with a stronger voice: "I am going. They have finished me—at thirty-five—"

The wine had strengthened and reanimated him. With his physical powers his evil passions were also roused. He ground his teeth, as he muttered a few words, indicating that bitter and revengeful feelings were swelling in his heart. A fierce gleam shot from his eye as he exclaimed with a horrible oath, "If I could only once ——"

The unfinished sentence died on his lips, which were distorted by a convulsive

spasm, and again cold drops were wiped from his brow by the lady, no longer sensible of the fatigue and exhaustion with which she had been sinking, and wholly absorbed by the terrible scene before her. To see this suffering wretch, maimed and mutilated, struggling with death—declaring that he knew he had not many hours to live, yet cherishing in all their fierceness the feelings of hatred and revenge.

It was dreadful. She strove to soothe him;—strove to turn his thoughts into a new channel, and said, in a gentle voice, "You refuse medical help; but if you believe your days are few on the earth, you will not refuse to see a priest?"

"A priest!" he repeated, and for a moment his eye again kindled fiercely; but after a pause of reflection, he said, "No! I will not refuse to see a priest! There is one I fain would see — fain make a confession. Let some one seek him. Le Père

St. Eustache! he is to be found at the Hôtel Gaillard, at the foot of the hill."

Guillaume the guide undertook the commission.

"Tell him," said the sick man, struggling to bear up against the faintness which came over him at intervals; "tell him I am now willing to make a confession, to reveal the secret he has so long desired to hear. But he must make haste, or it will be too late. Give him this, and say, if he fears for his safety, to bring some of his people with him. Do not forget the name. It is Le Père St. Eustache for whom you must inquire!"

The guide took the handkerchief he drew from his vest, and was about to depart, but Pedrillo met him at the door, and questioned him. It was no part of his plan to let this man go rambling about at his pleasure, now that he had become a sharer in the secret of Lady Felsenberg's escape,

and he positively refused to let him leave the house at present. But again the lady's impetuous character bore down opposition, and prevailed. Too good a Catholic not to have full faith in the efficacy of the Church's rites, and quite resolved that no consideration of her own safety should interfere with the administration of the last sacrament to the dying man, she compelled Pedrillo again to give way against his judgment, and the messenger departed ; Troquilet having already been despatched on a mission of importance.

As he returned to the room where the sufferer lay, a cold and cheerless beam of the winter sun, streaming through the unglazed casement, fell on the sick man's pallid face. A frightful wound on his head added to its ghastly expression, and the mire on his garments to the general wretchedness of his appearance.

Pedrillo looked earnestly at him, advanced to the side of the bed, and again

examined him. At length he said, "I am not mistaken: It *is* Boutonnier!"

"Yes, I am Boutonnier, and *she* was sent to help me," he replied, looking up, and pointing to Lady Felsenberg, who still kept her post beside him, engaged in her work of Christian kindness — striving to alleviate his bodily pain, and calm the turbulence of his fierce and rebellious spirit.

"She seeks to help me," he repeated; while, for a moment, a soft and gentle expression seemed to steal over his features. "To succour and soothe me in my dying hours. Oh, if I could live, I would unsay all—all the falsehoods I told for the purpose of bringing her head to the block—to serve—to promote the plans of ——"

He broke off abruptly, ground his teeth, and the muscles of his face worked convulsively. Suddenly, he inquired what day of the week it was. They told him.

"Ha!" he murmured, "it was only two days I lay in that dark pit—I thought it was a week—and *he* sent me there, for whom I told those lies—and she ——"

"They were not falsehoods you told in the court of justice," she said, in a gentle voice. "And if they had been, and you had other and greater crimes on your conscience, still God is merciful!"

"Lies! lies! They were all lies!" he exclaimed, vehemently, interrupting her. "I saw nothing; knew nothing. It was Willy the singer, who saw, who heard, but he refused to tell it in court, because you had been kind to him once, when he was in distress, and I ——"

A fainting collapse again subdued his strength. He sunk back, and lay still and silent, while Lady Felsenberg anxiously turned her eyes to the door, and listened for the arrival of the spiritual succour the unhappy man so much required.

At length, the gloomy and sad stillness which now reigned in the chamber of death, was broken by the sound of approaching footsteps, and the voices of men.

"He is come!" she said joyfully. "We will leave you alone with the man of God. You will confess your sins to him, and he will give peace to your troubled spirit."

"Yes, yes," he replied, now again reviving, and apparently restored at once to strength; for his eye shot a keen glance towards the opening door, and his face flushed as he repeated "Yes, he is come! He is come!"

"Alas!" she said, as Pedrillo hurried her out of the room by one door, as a stranger wrapped in a cloak entered by another. "Alas! this unhappy man is ill fit to die, for even now there is a wild fierceness in his eye. The holy man will have hard work to subdue this rebellious spirit to penitence and prayer!"

Mechanically swallowing the food which was now brought to her, and mournfully ruminating on the miserable condition of this man, which had made her forget she needed any, she sat counting the beads of her rosary, and praying for pardon and peace to the suffering sinner. Suddenly a wild, an inhuman yell rang through the adjoining chamber. It seemed to curdle the blood of every one on whose ear it fell, and they rushed with beating hearts to the sick man's bed, whose ghastly features, stiffening in the mortal convulsion which was closing his existence, exhibited a grin of fiendlike triumph, as his eye glared on the face of the stranger, whose body he held in his arms, clutched in the iron grasp of a fierce and fell revenge. They were both covered with blood, which was flowing from a large wound in the stranger's throat. It was Durochet: he was already dead: his murderer was dying: his muscles

relaxed: his arms ceased to grasp his victim, and his features settled into the cold calm of death, but still bearing traces of the ferocious impulse of his spirit in his last moments.

It would be irksome to relate the crafty stratagems, and feigned inability to speak but in a whisper, by which he drew his enemy close and closer to him; who, armed and on his guard—his people at the door—believed himself safe, till he found his arms pinioned in the vice-like grasp of the desperate wretch, whom he had sacrificed to secure his own safety, but who, by the justice of God, had proved the instrument of his destruction.

We will drop the curtain on this scene of treachery, revenge, and murder, and turn to a gentler page.

CHAPTER XII.

While these events had been passing, Herman had been enduring the various torments of a malignant fever, but happily exempt from mental suffering. In about a fortnight, the malady appeared to be subdued. The patient sunk into a quiet sleep, from which he awoke weak indeed, but sensible and free from pain, to the great joy of Fritz, to whom he spoke as he appeared beside his bed.

"Tell me, Fritz," he said, "was it a dream—was it all a dream?"

"I dare say it was, sir, for you had many dreams lately, and wild enough they were."

"I thought I was at Felsenberg ——"

"That was a dream, sure enough!" said Fritz, looking round the mean and coarsely furnished chamber.

"Gertrude and Blanche, my—my cousin were weeping over me because I was ill, and my mother ——"

Suddenly he paused. Instead of swallowing the contents of the cup the man held to his lips, he grasped with all the little strength he had, the arm that held it, and said in a slow hesitating manner, as if afraid to ask the question which hovered on his lips. "Tell me, Fritz, my mother ——"

"Safe and well, noble sir!" replied Fritz, boldly, although, in truth, he knew nothing about it, except the vague rumour he had heard, that she had escaped from Paris. And this, in fact, was all that any one knew, except the few persons who had aided her escape.

Apparently satisfied with this answer,

Herman lay some time still, and then said, "Fritz, I must get up! We must go out, to see my sister, and ——"

"The saints be good unto us!" exclaimed Fritz. "I wish we could go out, that we were strong enough to get up! But the thing is impossible!"

Finding the invalid obstinately bent on making the attempt, he said, "Well, sir, wait a bit till I get your clothes." Retiring as he spoke.

Soon the sound of whispering voices near him caught his ear, as he lay waiting in expectation of his man's return. A female came to the side of the bed: he looked eagerly up at her. It was Michelette. With a sort of vague feeling of disappointment, he turned his eyes away. At the opposite side, another fluttering petticoat appeared. Again he looked up, and murmured, as he stretched forth his arms, "It was *not* all a dream! It was Blanche, my own, my

betrothed Blanche, whose tears fell on my face!"

It was, indeed, the now happy Blanche, who knelt beside his bed. But so pale, so thin, and care-worn, the mere shadow of herself; for she had suffered greatly, both in mind and body, during the dangerous stages of the malady which had threatened to destroy a life to her so precious. But now there was a promise of returning health on his pale cheek; his eyes were again fixed on her, beaming with the fondest affection, and the tears that now fell from hers, were tears of joy and thankfulness.

Not more than another week passed, ere the invalid was seated beside the fire in his chamber, anticipating with much satisfaction the return of Michelette with food, for which he was waiting with some impatience.

The door opened, the hungry man looked up, but it was Pedrillo who entered, followed by a young man of rather singular appearance;

for, although the nascent beard on his face scarcely announced the age of manhood, there were nevertheless on it traces of sorrow, and such deep dejection, as it is painful to see at any age, but tenfold more so when stamped on a youthful countenance. There was a downcast look, the eye appeared to be raised unwillingly, as if oppressed by shame or fear; and when for a moment he looked around, it was with a wild and hurried glance, as if he expected to find a foe in every one who approached.

Although his cheek was swarthy and sunburned, and his complexion of that sallow hue which indicates ill health of body, or deep discontent of mind, in all other respects the features and form of the youth were good, his frame strong and symmetrically built, his features regular and well fashioned.

"Now, noble sir!" said Pedrillo, as he entered, addressing Herman with the

recently acquired polish of his manners and language, which bespoke his ambition to elevate himself to a higher place in society, and to become a gentleman, "Now, noble sir, knowing the strong interest you feel on the subject, I have brought you one who can give you the information you wish to obtain. This young man can tell you what probability there is of getting Michel Dumarais released from the galleys."

"Speak, my friend!" he added, turning to the stranger: but the youth only directed towards him and Herman one of his wild and hurried glances, coloured deeply through the dark tints of his bronzed cheek, and remained silent.

A moment afterwards, his face seemed totally changed in its expression; his eye lighted up, sparkled with animation, with joy, and confidence. He sprang forward towards the door on the opposite side of

the room, which had just been opened by Michelette, who entered, bearing the food for which Herman waited.

"Mother! my mother!" exclaimed the youth.

Michelette stood for a moment still, pale, and trembling. The basin she held fell from her hands, and she too sprang forward.

A meeting like this may be better imagined than described. When the poor mother's sobs and tears of joy, and her rapid alternations from lamentation to rejoicing had a little abated, she quitted her son, and threw herself at the feet of Herman, exclaiming, as she clasped his knees, "Oh, noble gentleman, 'tis to you I owe this blessed hour! I knew you would do it! I knew you would keep your word. My husband doubted, but *I* never did. No; I knew if you lived, my poor Michel would be set free, and come to me again! But not yet—I did not expect him yet!

no, not for a long time—and he is here! here! May God fill your own heart with the same joy you have bestowed on me. He is here! he is here!" she repeated, springing up to throw her arms again round the neck of her son, and then draw him towards the door, exclaiming, "Come, Michel, come! Let us go to your father!"

The substitution of a scene like this for the nourishment he needed, was by no means beneficial to the weak and irritable nerves of the invalid; and as Michelette was about to quit the room, she saw with grief that he had sunk back on his seat, agitated and exhausted.

With a multitude of self-accusations, she hurried away, and returning almost instantly with the necessary food, she stood watching him as he ate it, with the same affectionate solicitude as if he too had been her son; till she saw him strengthened and revived, when she again quitted the room.

Scarcely six weeks had elapsed since the trial of Lady Felsenberg, when Herman, restored to health, was sitting alone in his chamber, anxiously waiting the arrival of Pedrillo, who had promised to come, but who, however, came not. At length, weary of waiting, and anxious to see him, he determined to go in search of him. At a certain hour of the day he knew he was often to be found at a place he called his office, and there he repaired.

As he passed through the narrow court, and ascended the broken steps, the sound of music met his ear, and he gladly listened to the well known air of Pedrillo's own composition, and dedicated to Tornalina,

> 'Oh, the maid with the starry eyes,—
> Graceful and gay as a fairy queen,'

since it announced his presence. Pedrillo, who now neither wore his handsome uniform, nor any shabby disguise, but dressed like a

gentleman, received him with a polished courtesy of manner, perfectly according with his costly garments. His language, too, had undergone a great change. It was no longer coarse and slangy. He appeared at once to have passed from the grub to the butterfly, and was now exhibiting his elegant and airy wings. Herman was astonished at the metamorphosis, and could not but admire the extraordinary versatility of this man's talents. But soon his thoughts reverted to a more absorbing subject, and he proceeded to question him why he had not kept his appointment.

"I am waiting the commands of a great lady," he replied, "and I must not stir till I receive them. I expect a summons to her presence, and I must not fail to obey it!"

"The Queen of Navarre?" said Herman.

"No. A younger, more beautiful, and more powerful lady."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Herman, astonished. "I knew not that France contained such a woman!"

"Such is the fact, however," he replied. "I have already had the honour of being admitted several times to her private cabinet."

A messenger at this moment arrived, and he hastily departed with an assurance that Herman should see him in the evening. Till the evening, then, he was compelled to wait; and so late was it before he made his appearance, that he had lost all hope of seeing him, when he entered.

"Now," he said, as he seated himself at the request of his host, "I am here to answer all your questions. You know already, that Madame de Felsenberg is among the holy sisterhood of Our Lady of Mercy."

"Yes, but is she safe there?"

"Quite safe! The Lady Abbess belongs

to a noble family, remotely allied to yours, and is aware of the necessity of secrecy and caution. Every precaution is observed to ensure her safety."

"And the King—is there any hope that the Queen of Navarre will be able to obtain a pardon for her?"

"None whatever! Her Highness is greatly chagrined at the ill success of her efforts, which have been unceasing since his return. He has often promised, and as often failed to keep the promise. She has at length abandoned all hope of succeeding. The minister is too powerful. The Baron de Montmorency and the Signor Bel' Occhi are in the Bastile, on account of the active part they took in the escape of the prisoner."

Herman sat listening in silent despondency while Pedrillo spoke, who, after a short pause, continued, "Notwithstanding these ugly circumstances, we need not

despair; for we have another friend, powerful as the mighty minister, ably and willingly fighting by our side."

"Indeed!" said Herman, astonished. "Who may this be?"

"I will tell you. Do you remember one morning, about two months since, as we were passing through the *Rue des Minimes*, a quarrel had taken place between a large dog and a little one, which would have terminated ill for the smaller combatant but for your interference? Do you remember this?"

"Yes, yes," replied Herman, somewhat peevishly. "I recollect something about an ugly cur, and a screaming woman: what has that to do with the subject on which we were speaking?"

"Ah, noble sir," said Pedrillo, with great gravity, "I told you then, and I repeat it now, that, when you know the world as well as I do, you will learn to respect a

dog, if it be the pet of a great lady, as I suspected that lady to be you call a screaming woman, by the civil insolence with which she thanked you for rescuing her darling; although, through accident or caprice, she was unattended. I followed her, and found I was right. She *was* a great lady; and that interesting little animal you so irreverently name an ugly cur is our powerful and steady friend, whose influence is alone able to cope with the ambition of the minister; and to effect what the persevering and earnest entreaties of the Queen of Navarre, the heroic exertions of some of the most distinguished men in France, and, though last not least, the crafty stratagems and unrivalled talents of Pedro Benares, — what all these powerful engines united could not effect, this little dog will do. Yes; confidently I assert the fact, *Coco* will beat the minister!"

While Pedrillo spoke thus, Herman sat

gazing at him, unable to decide whether he had been drinking too freely, or was only amusing himself with a sorry sort of jesting.

"You do not understand this affair, noble sir," he continued; "I will explain it to you. When I found how desperate was our position, how utterly unavailing our attempts to remedy it, I recollected the affair of the fighting dogs, and hope again awoke in my heart. I have said, I ascertained who the lady was. I asked an audience; it was accorded. I had the satisfaction to learn that *Coco* had suffered no serious injury; and I took the opportunity to relate the perilous situation in which your family were placed, as well as yourself, who had so promptly come forward to his rescue. She listened to me with the most gracious condescension, and an air of interest in my tale that cheered me greatly."

"And this lady—who is she?"

"Please to let me go on, noble sir. The lady listened in silence till I narrated all that had been done, and my fears that all hope was lost, when she broke in on my tale with a scornful curl on her lip, and said quietly, but decidedly, 'Oh no, indeed; Monsieur Duprat is not so omnipotent as you believe him to be; and I am sure it is quite impossible the suit of her Highness of Navarre should ultimately fail. I will inquire about it.' I was then dismissed; and I departed uttering silent blessings on the little rumpled nose, which plainly indicated to me the triumph of our cause, and the downfal of the minister. He has had the ill fortune to displease *her*, and his fate is decided."

"And who is this lady, if this be not all a jest?" said Herman again.

"Who is the lady?" repeated Pedrillo. "Who should she be but Mademoiselle de Heilly, about to be created Duchesse

D' Estampes, the King's darling, and the mistress of *Coco*."

"You believe she will obtain a pardon for my mother?"

"No; I believe there will be no pardon in the case. When ladies undertake reform, it is generally a radical one; they dislike half measures. *This* lady is a fair sample of her sex. She took up your cause, and set to work vigorously. It is little more than a week since I was honoured with my first audience, and she has already made some of the judicial puppets dance to a strange tune, by the activity with which she has been pulling the wires that move them. This is all I can tell you. To-morrow I shall know more: I am commanded to attend her early in the morning. As it is now late I will, with your permission, retire."

He departed, leaving Herman to his own reflections, which were far from unplea-

sant ones. Fortune seemed at length weary of the unrelenting persecution with which she had so long pursued him. Hope, bright, cheering hope, awoke again, and spread a peaceful and happy prospect of the future before him.

He was not disappointed. The next noon brought Pedrillo again with pleasant news. The judges who had been present at the trial of Lady Felsenberg had again assembled, and, after due consultation, had declared the proceedings to be altogether irregular and illegal; and, as such, had caused them to be erased from the registers of the Court.

"And now, noble sir," he said, "I am instructed to inform you, that you have permission to repair to the dwelling, and to kiss the fair hand of the lady who has brought about this happy change in your destiny."

"Kiss her hand," said Herman, with a

somewhat dubious expression of countenance, "Yes, assuredly, I must avail myself of her leave to do so; but, first, I must ask permission to offer my thanks to the noble Lady of Navarre."

"Be it so, noble sir!" replied Pedrillo, with a low bow, and a grave air, "I beg leave to congratulate you on the restoration of your family to safety, wealth, and rank, which were all endangered; and, but for the active operations of this other lady, would be so still. I beg leave to say, if you do not take the very earliest opportunity of kissing *her* hand, and the paw of *Coco*, as well as that of my Royal Mistress, I shall declare you to be the most ungrateful of men."

CHAPTER XIII.

Ten years had elapsed since the occurrence of the events narrated in the preceding chapters. It was a bright and beautiful morning of September, when a lady and gentleman, attended by a few mounted and armed servants, were traversing the little kingdom of Navarre. They had quitted Milagro the day before, and hoped to have reached Olite before noon, when they made the unpleasant discovery, that they had deviated greatly from their intended route, and were now on the road running towards Piano. Fortunately the mistake was soon discovered, and they

learned, on inquiry, that by taking a short cut through a by-road, they would be again in the right track.

Following this advice they turned the horses' heads, and climbed the gentle ascent of a wood-crowned range of hills, and soon found the bridle road to which they had been directed. The principal person of this little band of travellers, was a handsome and noble-looking man, of a dignified and military air, apparently about thirty years of age. He was mounted on a strong and spirited horse, on which was also seated a sweet-faced and lovely female, a few years younger.

The path they had entered at the foot of the hills, as they mounted, led them through some beautiful sylvan scenery, where the rocky substratum, occasionally "cropping out," in strange fantastic shapes, amid the tangled foliage of brush-wood, and wild creepers, which partially clothed them,

now and then gave place to the deep shade of a thick-set group of high trees. As they rode slowly on, the gentleman turned to his companion with an animated countenance, about to express his admiration, but on looking at her he said, "Thou art indifferent to this beautiful scenery. Why is thy face so pensive, my precious Blanche?"

"I was thinking of our home," she replied, "of our children, of our noble boy, and my tiny Minna, and all the dear inmates of Felsenberg. It is a year since I left them."

"Ah!" said he, "you grudge the time I have devoted to finding out this Conde Benares, whose address I have unfortunately lost."

"Grudge," repeated the lady, "what a word! When did I ever grudge any thing which contributed to your pleasure?"

"Never, dearest! Thou hast ever been

to me a consoling angel in affliction, a sweet companion in my joyous hours. I am bound to consult thy comfort. We will not tarry longer on this uncertain chase, but return at once to Felsenberg. Since I am now free from my military chains."

"Nay, my husband," she said with a cheerful smile, "It is a debt of gratitude we have to pay the Conde Benares; we must strive to find our little friend. It will gratify him to exhibit himself to us in his present exalted position."

So absorbed were they in the subject of their colloquy that the way had been forgotten, till it terminated in a grassy glade. While they hesitated which way to turn, the voices of laughing shouting children were heard not far distant. They advanced in the direction of these cheerful and pleasant sounds, and soon came to the spot where a merry little group were assembled,

under the spreading branches of an enormous chestnut, from the shaking boughs of which the ripe fruit, enveloped in its thick green rind, came pelting down like a hailstorm about their ears. At every fresh volley new shouts of laughter echoed through the woods, and a scramble began among them in their eagerness to fill the wicker baskets which stood near.

As the travellers appeared a handsome and healthy-looking peasant, apparently about five or six-and-twenty, descended from the tree, and replied to their questions with much civility and intelligence, in the French language, with which he appeared much more familiar than with Spanish, or the ordinary *patois* of the district.

"We have been travelling many hours," said the gentleman. "Is there no place near where we may get food for ourselves and our horses?"

"None, sir," was the reply, "unless you

consent to accept such fare as my wife can set before you with a hearty welcome."

The hospitality so frankly offered was thankfully accepted, and they followed him to his home, a rustic but roomy cottage, with its little homestead, in which were some cows and pigs; surrounded and sheltered by olive and chestnut trees. On many of these the vines were clinging for support to sustain the heavy clusters of ripe grapes, swelling amid the leaves with cheering promise of an ample harvest, creating pleasant ideas of bright wine, and good cheer for the coming winter. A good-looking young woman stood smiling at the door, who gave the strangers a cordial welcome, and hastened to set before them the best she had to offer,—chestnut soup game, ham, and fruit; all excellent, as the hungry travellers proved by the rapidity with which they were despatched.

"This appears to be the abode of peace

and plenty," said the gentleman to his host. "Were those your children gathering chestnuts?"

"Two of them," he replied. "The two rosy-faced black-eyed boys of seven and eight years are my sons; and I have a chubby girl asleep in the next room, little more than a year old."

"You ought to be a happy man," observed the traveller: "you have many blessings."

"I *am* a happy man!" he said with some emotion. "I am also a thankful man, grateful for those blessings, which it has pleased Heaven to bestow upon me. Other men may have peace and prosperity in a happy home, as I have; but they can scarcely value them as I do, unless they have known adversity."

"You have not always, then, been prosperous and happy?"

"No — oh no!" he replied, with a

changing face, but seemed unwilling to speak on the subject; and seeing the strangers had all they required, he said, "I must leave you for a short time to the care of my wife. My mother is gone to a neighbouring village to purchase necessaries for the family. She has many things to bring, and is mounted on a mule which is sometimes very stubborn. I must go and meet her." So saying, he departed.

Scarcely a minute elapsed ere the voices of the children were again heard gaily singing as they approached, and the traveller, somewhat surprised, listened to the air and the words with which the woods were echoing.

> 'Oh, the maid with the starry eyes,
> Graceful and gay as a fairy queen,'

came floating on the air.

"Your children must have had musical instruction," observed the traveller.

"Yes. Oh yes," replied Lila, the hostess, "every body knows something of music here. It would be considered a disgrace to be quite ignorant of it. My Lord, the Grand Forester, is a great musician. That air my boys are singing is one he composed himself. 'The maid with the starry eyes,' is said to be a lady of the Court. He is terribly in love, and has been hoping to marry her these many years; but she will not consent to quit the Queen, and the young Princess Jeanne her daughter. She is greatly attached to them both."

"Ha!" said the traveller, apparently surprised, his face lighting up with an expression of curiosity and interset, "what is her name?"

"She is called the Lady Tornalina."

"And my Lord, the Grand Forester?"

"The Conde Benares."

The travellers exchanged a glance, which spoke their satisfaction; and the hostess

was assailed with a multitude of questions on a subject which appeared equally interesting to both parties. Lila once set a-going on what appeared to be a darling theme, continued to narrate with extraordinary volubility, in her own native *patois*, the great and wonderful revolution my Lord, the Grand Forester, had effected in the morals and manners of the people of the district, since he had resided at the Castle of Bellamontes.

While she was speaking, the children brought in a huge basket of chestnuts between them, stumbled at the door, and spread its whole contents on the cottage floor.

"Ah, Gallopinos! Thou naughty Mico. This is the way with thee always!" she exclaimed, laughing, and helping to pick up the scattered fruit. "There, away with them to the granary."

"Your son is called Michel?" said the

stranger, as the children carried off the basket. "May I inquire your husband's name?"

"Galbinos," she replied.

He looked disappointed, but after a moment's pause, he said, "He is a Frenchman —has he always borne that name?"

She seemed to hesitate, and her face slightly flushed, as she replied, somewhat evasively, "He is a Frenchman. He has lways been called Galbinos."

Without waiting for farther questions she resumed the narrative which had been interrupted by the entrance of the children.

"Oh, if you had known this country before my Lord, the Grand Forester, took charge of it," she said, "you would scarcely believe it the same place. Such frightful robberies and murders used to be committed; neither rich nor poor were safe. I could tell you such terrible tales. Nobody worked. The people lived by thieving,

and yet many of them were half-starved. Those who would fain have earned an honest living could find nothing to do. But now it is very different. Musicians are always welcome, but my Lord will have no beggars; every body willing to work is employed and paid.

"In religious matters, too, there is a great change. We have no people now trying to ruin and destroy each other, because they happen to think differently on religious subjects. At first some of the priests, who had been used to rule the people, were very refractory. But they soon found it was quite useless to stand out against my Lord. He was always sure, in the end, to get the better of them, by hook or by crook, and have his own way.

"He never inquires whether a man is a Catholic or a Calvinista; all are protected alike, and have their own chapels and ministers.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, after a moment's pause, with great animation and a sparkling eye, "it would do your heart good to go through some of our villages on a Sunday, and see how merrily the people clack the castanets, and spring with clean and happy faces in the dance, beneath the chestnut trees, or on the open green when the sun is down; instead of the half-starved, dirty, and wicked wretches, that used to lounge about. Ah, my Lord is a clever man! It is curious to see sometimes what strange ways he takes to make people do what is right, and settles all quarrels so peaceably. He will have no fighting. He says, only fools fight, clever men have no need to do so."

The two boys now entered with another basket laden as before, when, at the sound of a snapping whip which was heard without, they both exclaimed, "Father, father!" abandoned the basket, and rushed out to

meet him; the little girl, who had crept into the room unnoticed, scrambling after them on her hands and knees, in a crab-like movement.

Soon the joyous group appeared at the door, and again the host, with the little girl in his arms, respectfully saluted the travellers, apparently pleased to find them still there.

"This is the lady and gentleman, mother, who, I told you, had honoured our cottage with their presence," he said, turning to a pale, small-featured woman behind him.

"Honoured indeed!" she said, earnestly gazing at the strangers as she advanced. "I am not mistaken: it is our noble benefactor the Count of Felsenberg, and Madame Blanche, his wife. Oh, this is a happy day, Michel!"

"Michelette!" exclaimed the lady and gentleman together. "Is it indeed Michelette, my careful nurse? and this is your son?"

said the Count, turning to the astonished young man. "It is Michel, as I believed; although I was puzzled by his change of name."

This was a happy meeting to all parties. A noble recompense for Herman's benevolent exertions in their favour was bestowed on him by the sight of these two victims of bad laws, or laws badly administered, rescued from an abyss of vice and misery, and filling a useful and honourable place in society, respected and beloved, blessing and blest.

"This is a jubilee for us, Blanche," he said, giving way to the joyous feelings of his warm heart.

"Yes, dearest," she replied, "it is indeed a happy day." And then, with the true tact of a kind and gentle woman, added, taking the baby on her lap as she spoke, "Now that we know who are our hosts, shall we not ask leave to stay a few hours

longer in this pleasant cottage?" For she had observed that Michel, on being recognised, had put the child down and retreated, as if reluctant to be seen. She knew his story, and she saw poor Michel remembered that he bore the felon's brand on his shoulder, that he had once been chained in the galleys, and involuntarily shrunk from sight.

Reassured by the kindness and respect with which his illustrious guests treated him, he came forward and offered accommodation for the night. As the day was already far advanced this was readily accepted, and the whole family dispersed in different directions, to collect materials for the supper and make arrangements for sleeping.

The hearty good will with which every body went to work produced the happiest results. An excellent supper was soon placed on the table, at which the Count

Herman, with some difficulty, prevailed on his hosts to take a seat, while his servants waited on them all; and, in their turn, were regaled to their heart's content with the remaining provisions, and plenty of good wine.

Michel, gradually regaining his courage and self-respect, related many anecdotes of the Grand Forester's singular methods of overcoming the resistance of refractory persons, which occasionally raised a hearty laugh. He also told his own short history, and the great interest the Conde Benares had always taken in his fate, from the time he had witnessed the first interview between himself and his mother after their long separation. Pedrillo, indeed, had been deeply moved thereby, and from that time had patronized the young man with a steady kindness, which rendered him prosperous and happy, as we have seen, — in a roomy cottage, surrounded by a family who loved,

and neighbours who respected him, and Michelette, his widowed mother, as a cherished inmate.

Herman learned with regret that he had no chance of seeing his old friend, Pedrillo, transformed into a great man, and playing a part so distinguished; playing it too, as appeared from the account of Michel and his wife, with such a happy result to the welfare and prosperity of the people. The Conde Benares was absent on a mission to the Court of France, which, being a sort of "secret service" affair, requiring much tact and address, had been confided to his management by the King of Navarre, as best able to bring about a successful issue; and he had been despatched with an official cloak, covering his real purpose.

After passing a pleasant evening, the noble guests retired to a comfortable bed-room, which was ever afterwards distinguished by the name of "the Count's chamber.

In the morning they took leave of the family, and departed, bearing with them the blessings of the grateful people, to whose happiness and prosperity they had so greatly contributed.

As they rode on their way, Blanche looked at her husband's thoughtful face, and said, "Now, Herman, it is you who are pensive: what subject occupies you so deeply?"

"I was thinking," he replied, "that this low born, self-educated Pedrillo, whom I so despised, and who has had none of the advantages I have had, is nevertheless a far greater man, a more useful individual, a better member of society, than myself."

"Pedrillo a better, a greater man than you?" said the astonished wife. "You, so distinguished as a general, standing so high in the esteem of the Emperor, and the opinion of the world!"

"Yes, I am renowned as a man of the

sword, one of those for whom Pedrillo entertained a great contempt; I begin to think he was not altogether wrong. The true way to estimate a man is by the degree in which he benefits others, the proportion of happiness he bestows on his fellow mortals. What have I ever done for such a purpose? My business has been to devise the readiest means to destroy them. This man stands far above me, as the benefactor of mankind."

"Nay, Herman!" she said warmly, "this is unjust to yourself, and the warrior's noble calling. A military commander is not a butcher, whose business is to kill. His talents are exerted to repel aggression, to protect the weak, drive off the spoiler, to guard their own, and the people's property and rights. Soldiers are the guardians and defenders of their native land. A noble task?"

"Well, love," he replied, with a smile of

affection, "at any rate, the soldier has a warm advocate in you. But this Conde Benares was certainly right, when he said that soldiers were necessary in proportion as the people, governed and governors, were barbarous. As they become civilized, men of the sword are less needed, less lauded, less prized."

The conversation now turned to a new subject. They rode on their way pleasantly chatting, and in due time arrived, without accident or adventure worth recording, at Felsenberg.

How shall I describe the meeting which there took place? Mr. Dickens would fill half a volume with such a scene as was there enacted, and then leave the reader untired with the tale. But, as I have no such powers, I shall briefly state, that the young heir of Felsenberg sprang forward with a joyful shout, holding his little sister with one hand, to welcome his father and

his mother, while, with the other, he nearly tore Aunt Gertrude's dress off, in his eagerness to make her keep pace with his own bounding steps. Gertrude,—once more the gay, the laughing, and now the darling *Aunt* Gertrude,—who cried and laughed by turns, at sight of the long absent, and beloved brother and sister, while Lady Felsenberg, with a heart swelling with joy and thankfulness, stood struggling to suppress and subdue the wild rush of affectionate impulse, which she now mistrusted, having learned by bitter experience, that the unrestrained indulgence of even maternal affection may produce evil.

There too stood another young aunt, a slender, graceful, and lovely girl of thirteen, the little Betta of our tale.

What a happy group was that which assembled round the supper-table, in the hall at Felsenberg, on that evening; where the servants of the household crowded in.

disputing with each other the privilege of waiting on them. Foremost among them were Esther and Fritz. But one white head, one attached heart, was sadly missed. The good, the faithful old Barneck, was sleeping in peace beneath the ancient elms

"Which wreathed their old fantastic roots so high,"

in the chapel ground. He had seen the family he served and loved restored to prosperity and peace, and had closed his eyes in his long last sleep, contented.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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